

Lebanese Christians urge election boycott

BEIRUT (R) — Christian opposition leaders urged the Lebanese on Friday to boycott next month's parliamentary elections, denouncing a newly approved election law and saying the polls would be controlled by Syria.

"We warn you, Lebanese people, against taking part in these elections whether as candidates or voters. They are the most dangerous forgery aimed at erasing the Lebanese homeland," Dori Chamoun, leader of the right-wing National Liberal Party, told a news conference.

"Your boycott is a duty and responsibility and it is

a rejection of humiliation. It is an act of faith in Lebanon," he said in a joint statement with former President Amin Gemayel and former army commander Michel Aoun, both of whom live in exile in Paris. The elections are expected to begin on Aug. 18 or 25.

The vast majority of Christians and many Muslims boycotted the 1992 elections on similar grounds.

Parliament approved on Thursday a government-backed law to allow-made to ensure the election of Druze leader Walid Jumblatt, an ally of the Syrian-backed government, at the

expense of the Christians. The law divides overwhelmingly Christian Mount Lebanon governorate into six smaller constituencies based on districts. This will ensure Mr. Jumblatt's election with his pro-government Druze and Christian supporters because at least two of the six districts have Druze majorities.

Under the 1989 Taif accord that set out the political settlement ending the 1975-90 civil war, all constituencies should be based on governorates.

"The next parliament will be more hideous than today's parliament. Its law

is forged and rejected," Mr. Chamoun said.

"The election will take place amid the coerced absence (in exile) of the national leadership and under illegal regulations, supervised by a non-Lebanese authority which is politically and militarily dominant and exerting pressure to achieve its direct interests at the expense of our national dynamic and core interests," the joint statement said in a clear reference to Syria, which has 35,000 troops in Lebanon.

"We strongly believe the role of the next parliament is to pursue the plan to

dilute the Lebanese entity," it added.

Many Christians now believe the 1992 boycott simply allowed the election of an overwhelming majority of pro-Syrian deputies of all sects and left the Christian opposition unrepresented in parliament and seriously weakened in the state.

Political analysts say more independent or opposition Christian deputies would be elected if Mount Lebanon was allowed to vote as a single constituency.

Greece firm in blocking EU funds to Turkey

ATHENS (R) — Greece stood firm on Friday in blocking European Union funds to Turkey despite EU pressure to lift its objections before Monday's foreign ministers' meeting in Brussels.

"It does not depend on me," Foreign Minister Theodoros Pangalos told reporters on the prospects for a breakthrough. "It depends on all 15 members. I tried my best."

Mr. Pangalos made the comments shortly after a meeting with Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring, who arrived in Athens on Friday to apply EU pressure for a compromise. Ireland currently holds the EU's rotating presidency.

Greece blocked in March a 375 million ECU (\$490 million) EU aid package to Ankara designed to help it adjust to a market-opening customs union with the EU that came into effect in January.

Greece and Turkey came close to armed conflict in January over rights of an uninhabited islet in the eastern Aegean Sea. A clash was averted through a U.S. compromise but Athens has since blocked all moves that will bring Turkey closer to Europe.

Athens has said it wants the EU to say that it considers Greece's borders as its own, put pressure on Turkey to respect existing border treaties and resolve disputes through the international court at the Hague.

Turkey wants differences to be resolved through direct dialogue with Greece but Athens says it will never negotiate its territory.

Egypt's Al Azhar University bans book on prophets; police to question author

CAIRO (R) — Muslim clerics at Al Azhar, Egypt's highest Islamic authority, have banned a book about prophets and police will question its author on charges of insulting the messengers, government newspapers said on Friday.

The daily Al Akhbar said some 3,000 copies of "A Psychological Analysis of Prophets" by magazine journalist Abdullah Kamal have already been sold.

Police seized three copies of the book from its distributors and proofs for a second edition after Al Azhar's Islamic Research Academy (IRA) issued a fatwa (religious edict) banning its publica-

tion and distribution, the paper said.

Al Akhbar said the clerics objected to the book's "depiction of prophets in terms that violate their religious position."

The daily Al Gomhuria said police would interrogate Mr. Kamal, who writes for the Egyptian Rose Al Youssef magazine.

Clerics from Al Azhar Islamic Research Academy have in the past banned books that survived government censorship, usually because they contained explicit sex or unorthodox attitudes towards Islam.

Intellectuals have criticised what they call the government's submission

to Al Azhar's conservative views.

Many held Al Azhar responsible for the 1992 killing of secular writer Faraj Foda by Muslim militants who quoted a statement by Al Azhar academy saying Mr. Foda's writings were blasphemous to Islam.

Novelist Ala Hamed was sentenced to eight years in jail in 1991 after Al Azhar called one of his novels blasphemous. He remains in legal limbo because the prime minister never endorsed his sentence.

Mr. Hamed lost his government job in 1994 because government censors ruled that his unpublished book "El Firash" (the bed) contained

explicit descriptions of sex.

Al Azhar's most famous ban came in 1959 when it objected to "Children of Gabalawi" by Egypt's Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz on the grounds that it offends Islam by including characters clearly representing God and the prophets.

Newspapers serialised the book after Muslims militants stabbed and seriously wounded Mr. Mahfouz in 1994.

Two militants were executed for the attack on Mr. Mahfouz, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1988.



AN EGYPTIAN WORKER CLEANS OLD PYRAMID STONES: An Egyptian antiquities worker cleans a rock at the site of the 4500-year-old Seneferu pyramid Friday with a view of the "bent" pyramid in the background. Egypt will soon reap the rewards from one of its best endowed pyramid fields when the site reopens to the public on July 15 after 40 years masquerading as a military base (Reuters photo)

Religious police enforce Islamic values in Saudi Arabia

By Christine Hauser
Reuters

RIYADH — It is dusk in Saudi Arabia and the call to prayer echoes through the streets of Riyadh. A van creeps along in low gear, keeping pace with pedestrians.

"Muslims, go pray," a man in the vehicle says by loudspeaker. Saudi Arabia's mutawain, a type of roving religious police in long white robes and beards, are seen by many as necessary enforcers of Islamic values and behaviour in the kingdom, guardian of Islam's holiest sites.

Mutawain are "like an antibiotic. Some people are ill. Some people don't want moral cleanliness," said Khaled Al Sherqawi, a Moroccan teacher at the office for propaganda and guidance, which educates converts to Islam.

Their role is "like an obstacle between these people and their Satanic deeds," he added. Mutawain, which means enforcers of obedience in Arabic, are government employees

in the Committee to Prevent Vice and Protect Virtue, a semi-autonomous agency that encourages adherence to Islamic values by monitoring public behaviour.

They roam streets and shopping malls, sometimes tapping on windows to make sure shops close at prayer time. They must be accompanied by police and can detain people for up to 24 hours.

As the custodian of Islam's two holy shrines, Saudi Arabia sees itself as having a special responsibility to the world's millions of Muslims to uphold strict Islamic tenets.

But it is also home to about six million foreigners, including one of the largest populations of Americans outside the United States. Non-Muslims must adhere to Saudi rules prohibiting immodest dress, alcohol and mixing with the opposite sex.

Diplomats say the mutawain have become more active, including in Riyadh's diplomatic area, since the 1991 Gulf war, when thousands of foreign

troops poured into Saudi for the push that ended Iraq's occupation of Kuwait.

Women especially are careful. They are not allowed to drive, they risk arrest for being in a vehicle driven by a man who is not an employee or relative, and they must wear a long "abaya" robe.

"They (mutawain) know some words in English like 'cover' and 'wear your scarf'," said a Western nurse who wears an abaya and like many other women says she has no problem with it. "I haven't had bad experiences. Most of them are really nice."

Most Westerners live in compounds where they drink home-brewed alcohol, dress the way they want and hold parties.

"Basically you do what you want on the compounds" where the mutawain are not allowed entry, said a British businessman.

But when foreigners leave the compounds' high walls, they are fair game. Some say they were sent to jail by over-zealous

mutawain because they walked out of a compound at the wrong time, merging with a group of party-makers who had been drinking.

Some women say they have been shouted at to cover their hair or had a stick waved at their bare ankles.

"I was in one of the shopping malls with my daughter, who had an abaya on. We were looking at gold in a shop. Suddenly we had a mutawain behind us, telling her to cover her hair," said a Western businessman. "We ignored him and he walked away."

The U.S. 1996 human rights report on Saudi Arabia, a public document, said mutawain "continued to confront, and sometimes abuse, citizens and foreigners." It added that there was harassment by "religious vigilantes acting independently."

It said actions included closing shops at prayer times, and enforcing modest dress and avoidance of video rental shops. It said the mutawain expected

Arab, African and Asian women to comply fully with dress codes but in recent years they had increased pressure on Westerners to wear an abaya and cover their hair.

"They also harassed and arrested non-Muslims attempting to conduct religious services," the report said.

The report alleged that there had been some cases of forced entry into private homes and physical abuse. It said the Saudi government at times tightened control over them and instructed them to be polite.

There were no official figures immediately available on how many mutawain are in Saudi Arabia. One diplomat said he believed they were recruited from the religious Imam University in Riyadh and another Islamic institution in nearby Buraidah.

One day in July, vans painted with the mutawain emblem were parked outside their Riyadh office, a villa-style building which opens onto a courtyard surrounded by a high

wall. Four "mutawain" sat inside. They sat a chair in the leafy courtyard for a woman reporter, who was asked to pass written questions through the door or shout them into the room.

They served sweet tea and filled their visitor's arms with books on Islam. After one of them checked by telephone with authorities, they politely declined to answer questions.

"We want to answer your questions but I must obey," said a mutawain apologetically. Sherqawi was more expressive when explaining their role. He prefers to call them "mutawain," which means committed Muslim.

"For example now there is no light," he said, leaping up to turn off a switch and blanketing the room in darkness. "Now this is the mutawain," he said, filling the room with light.

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JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:00 Moomin
15:30 Pumpkin Patch
16:10 Jake / Big Brother Jake
17:00 Olympia
17:00 News flash
17:02 Science Cartoon
17:15 Document — La Vie
Devant Moi
17:30 Game Show — Que Le
Meilleur Gagne
18:00 Serie — Chateau Vallon
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 Magazine — Faut Pas
Rever
19:30 New headlines
19:35 The Torklesons
20:00 Album Show
20:50 Miami Vice
21:30 Prism
22:00 News in English
22:25 The Bold and the Beautiful
23:10 Feature Film — "Foul
Play"

PRAYER TIMES

04:01 Fajr
05:34 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:41 Dhuhr
16:22 Asr
19:48 Maghreb
21:21 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweilieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661656.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Terrassaneta Church Tel.

622366

Church of the Annunciation

Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 652826

Armenian Catholic Church
Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church

Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel.

771751.

Amman International Church

Tel. 652526

Evangelical Lutheran Church

Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical

Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel.

654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel.

675691.

The Evangelical Local Church

in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking

Latin Catholics Parish Tel.
614190.

WEATHER

Moderate weather conditions will
prevail with temperatures below
average and winds northwesterly
moderate to active. In Aqaba,
winds will be northerly moderate
and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 18/29

Aqaba 24/37

Deserts 16/36

Jordan Valley 23/36

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 29, Aqaba 37 Humidity

readings: Amman 63 per cent,
Aqaba 44 per cent.

USEFUL

TELEPHONE

NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Issam Al Asmar 890504

Dr. Nidal As'ad 751672

Dr. Khalidoun Klob 816715

Dr. Osama Al Hussein 847289

Firas pharmacy 661912

Ferdows pharmacy 778336

Al Asema pharmacy 637055

Nairoukh pharmacy 623672

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shameisani pharmacy 637660

Najih pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir 276852

Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Nabli Al Safarini 901322

Khalilieh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111,

637777

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage Com-
plaints 897467

Amman Municipality Com-
plaints 787111

Telephone Information (direc-
tory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone

Repairs 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs

..... 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority

..... 815615

Electric Power Company

..... 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-

53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-

53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre

..... 813813/32

Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn

..... 64281/6

Akileh Maternity, J. Amn

..... 64241/2

Jabal Amman Maternity

..... 642362

Malhas, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Musabir Hospital 66727/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen

..... 777101/3

Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh

..... 775111/26

Army, Marka 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50

..... 674155

Al-Hospital 674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and

Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital

..... (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital

..... (09)900560

Don Sina Hospital (09)985732

Al Hikam Modern Hospital

..... (09)990990

IRBID:

Queen joins Bosnian women in Tuzla commemoration of Srebrenica women

AMMAN (J.T.) — A delegation headed by Her Majesty Queen Noor, U.S. Ambassador to Austria Swannee Hunt and Italy's Commissioner to the European Union Emma Bonino Thursday joined thousands of Bosnian women in Tuzla to commemorate the fall of Srebrenica, bringing with them economic development aid and international donations from countries throughout the world, a Royal Court statement said.

The donations included four tonnes of medical supplies from Jordan, half of which were donated by the Jordanian Pharmaceuticals Company; \$2.5 million from the European Union; \$100,000 from Pakistan as well as funds for women's economic development projects; equipment for a child-care centre from the Finnish government; several thousand dollar "micro-enterprises" loan funds from Bank Austria and Creditanstalt and a computer training laboratory from IBM, the statement said.

This visit came in commemoration of July 11, 1995, in Srebrenica, when a United Nations "safe haven," fell to advancing Serb forces.

The women and children of the town were separated from their menfolk and allowed to walk across nearby front lines to areas controlled by Bosnian government forces.

The men disappeared. At least 6,000 but possibly as many as 10,000 unarmed Muslim men and boys were killed after the fall of Srebrenica and buried in about a dozen mass-graves dotted throughout the hills surrounding the town.

The organisers of this commemorative event were Bosnian women refugees now living in Tuzla, who had invited Serb and Croat women to be with them, saying simply "we are all mothers."

They created a giant banner embroidered with the names of their missing boys and men as a symbol of their unity in grief.

Joined by the Vice-President of Bosnia-Herzegovina Mr. Ganic, Bosnian and international officials and women activists, the women welcomed the delegation to Tuzla, the statement said.

According to the statement, in a speech Queen Noor assured the women of Srebrenica that they are not alone, saying that "the women of our land, too, have repeatedly borne the consequences of war and



Her Majesty Queen Noor looks at small banners with names, year of birth and birthplace of missing Srebrenica men during a commemoration of the first anniversary of the bloody fall of Srebrenica, at the sports arena in Tuzla Thursday. The interior of the sports hall was covered with thousands of such banners. World women leaders joined some 6,000 Bosnian Muslim refugee women for the ceremony (Reuters photo)

upheaval; they too have had to rebuild lives and communities shattered by years of strife."

Reciting the verse (200) from Surat Al Imran, "Believers, be patient and forbear. Stand firm in your faith and fear God, so that you may triumph," the Queen called on the women to reach out to a new future and forge a new life, with the assurance that their cause and suffering will never be forgotten.

The Queen appealed to all parties to implement the Dayton accords, in particular those provisions concerning the refugees and the displaced.

She said that the War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague affirms our collective will that savagery and barbarism must not be tolerated by the community of nations.

According to the statement, Queen Noor also highlighted Jordan's ongoing support to the peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

At the outset, Jordan had called for a diplomatic solution to the conflict and for global action to stop the genocide and human suffering in Bosnia. Since 1992, the Jordan Hashemite Relief Organisation has been sending food, blankets, medical supplies and equipment to Bosnia. In 1993, Jordan hosted 94 Bosnian refugee families and provided them with housing, medical care and education.

The one-day telethon last year raised JD4.5 million as well as food, medical sup-

plies, clothes, building supplies, television and computer equipment. The Queen expressed her pride in the courage of the Jordanian peace keeping troops, who have been serving in the former Yugoslavia since 1992.

Ambassador Swannee Hunt recalled how, on the day Srebrenica fell to the Serb forces, she received a call from Queen Noor who said, "if we only watch this on the news, then we're guilty too."

The Queen had called Ambassador Hunt as the latter had assisted her in getting Bosnian children out of the country for medical treatment. This resulted in the establishment of the "Women of Srebrenica Project" with a steering committee chaired by Queen Noor, Swannee Hunt and Emma Bonino.

According to Ambassador Hunt, the committee's co-chairs sent out an open letter to first ladies, heads of state and prominent personalities asking for their support and drawing global attention to the plight of the women of Srebrenica.

She added that the Tuzla commemorative event came on the heels of U.S. President Bill Clinton's announcement at the G-7 meeting of a \$5 million donation to fund the Bosnian women's initiative, a portion of which will be allocated for economic development projects for the women of Srebrenica.

The ambassador concluded her speech saying that this delegation to Tuzla represents 500 international

women leaders, who have come "to honour your boys and men and to pray that the banner you have so painfully embroidered will become a blanket to comfort and warm the children of Bosnia-Herzegovina."

Commissioner Emma Bonino reaffirmed the commitment of the European Humanitarian Organisation to the women of Bosnia to help them "build a future of peace, justice and tolerance for yourself and your children."

The statement also said that there are 30,000 survivors of the Srebrenica massacre living in the area of Tuzla in temporary ill-equipped refugee camps.

The survivors are mothers, sisters, daughters and wives who are desperate to know the fate of their missing men and to have those responsible brought to justice.

They are women on whom their community's entire fate depends and who simply want to go home.

According to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, only 70,000 of the 2 million refugees and displaced persons have returned to their homes and ethnic cleansing is still being continued on a local level.

According to the statement, Queen Noor was accompanied by HRH Prince Zeid Ben Raad, who had served in the former Yugoslavia for two years as the United Nations' Political Affairs Officer.

Jordan, Yemen start money transfer service

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan and Yemen started exchanging postal money transfers as of July 11, in implementation of an agreement concluded earlier between both countries, according to Minister of Post and Telecommunications Jamal Sarairoh. Mr. Sarairoh said that, under the agreement, post offices in Jordan will accept money transfers up to JD 280 each, to be sent to Yemen, and the Yemeni post offices will accept cash transfers up to \$ 500 to be sent to Jordan. Yemen is the ninth country with which Jordan exchanges money transfers via their respective postal systems. The other countries are Morocco, Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Algeria, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Japan.

Deputies visit RJ facility, say report due in fall

AMMAN (J.T.) — The chairman of a parliamentary study committee Friday said that the committee would submit its "thorough and unbiased" report on the status of Royal Jordanian (RJ) to parliament in its upcoming October session.

Members of the committee met with RJ President and Chief Executive Officer Nader Dahabi as well as other senior assistants during a visit to the recently opened Dispatch Centre and the City Terminal.

Responding to questions from the press on the progress of the examination of RJ operations and administration, Dr. Mohammad Abu Aleem said the study was coming along well, adding that "in its investigations, the committee does not seek to level accusations at any party, but rather it is conducting a national service as requested by the Lower House and will present

their findings in a full and clear picture which should satisfy the deputies' quest for the truth."

According to Dr. Abu Aleem, "the committee is also finalising a study on RJ's plans for restructuring its operations and activities as well as rescheduling its debts."

He said that during Friday's visit, committee members had an opportunity to pose questions to Mr. Dahabi, particularly on the new City Terminal and its advantages to RJ passengers.

Dr. Aleem said panel members were satisfied with Mr. Dahabi's responses and quoted him as saying that 17 per cent of the RJ passengers currently use the facility and he expects increasing numbers of passengers to turn to the Seventh Circle station.

Last March, the five-member committee came under criticism by local

newspaper columnist Fahed Fanek. Dr. Fanek said the 12-day trip to Europe during which the committee visited RJ offices in Madrid, London and Rome was a waste of public funds that would achieve no purpose.

Dr. Fanek said the trip was unnecessary because the deputies "could have reviewed all the facts they needed about the national airline from its headquarters in Amman."

But Dr. Aleem said at the time that the parliament found it necessary to send the committee to Europe after receiving numerous complaints about RJ's operations; performance in both Arab and foreign countries.

Dr. Abu Aleem had said that the committee would continue its mission regardless of any criticisms and would seek to provide all necessary information about RJ's position.

Award of refinery contract appropriate, says Dabbas

By Samir Ghawi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Ahmad Bashir, secretary-general of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Friday stressed that the decision to award the contract for building a refinery at Aqaba to Corporate Holdings of America (CHA), was appropriate and was based on intensive studies that gave the highest attention to the interest of the country.

Speaking to the Arabic daily Al-Dustour, Mr. Bashir said, "CHA was a holding company with a \$1.5 billion capital. He was responding to allegations by the president of the Dallas-based consultancy Hutchison Group, the firm that lost the bid, that his group, which includes Texas-based construction firm H.B. Zachry International and California-based engineering group Parsons Corp., was unjustly treated by the ministry when

it selected CHA for the project.

In an interview with the Arabic weekly Shihaan, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Hashem Dabbas confirmed what his secretary-general has told Al-Dustour and denied as untrue that CHA was a weak company and that its capital was limited to enable it to carry out this project. He stressed that "until now there are no problems regarding the company which was recommended to us by the U.S. government."

Noting that the company was recommended by the U.S. commerce chief, who confirmed the information, said that the U.S. ambassador and the economic attaché at the U.S. embassy were present when the preliminary agreement was signed, Dr. Dabbas asked: "Is it logical that these Americans recommend a non-existent company?"

Asked about the company's capabilities and special-

ity, the minister told Shihaan that all companies have "people who do the financing and people who do the administration... that means you cannot find a specialised company in all these areas for this project."

The minister indicated that CHA will be submitting a performance guarantee by the middle of this month, although he did not mention what would be its value. "We will agree to it. Truthfully we are not paying a single fils. This project will be built and financed from outside. Jordan has not paid a fils."

Dr. Dabbas described as a lie and untrue allegations that the agreement will siphon out \$700 million from the local liquidity. He explained that CHA opened the opportunity for Jordanians, if they wanted, to buy shares in the project, and if they are not willing, nobody will force them to buy. "The financing will come from outside," he emphasised.

Replying to another question, Dr. Dabbas said the company was free to buy the equipment from anywhere because the refinery belonged to them and Jordan's involvement was in providing the site.

He denied that the second U.S. competitor that lost the bid had offered better terms especially the employment of 15,000 Jordanians. "Don't listen to them. They did not offer anything and I challenge them if they had offered anything."

The minister said that the company's 1993 registration date was not important and all that matters is its \$1.2 billion capital. "We have official documents from the U.S. administration to prove that."

Dr. Dabbas told the interviewer who asked him about rumours that commissions were paid to Jordanians: "Fear God. Whoever told you this is a liar. No commissions were paid and none will be," he emphasised.

Tokyo gathering looks at Jordan's investment climate

TOKYO (Petra) — A one-day symposium aimed at promoting investments in Jordan, and sponsored by the Jordanian embassy here, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and the Japanese Institute for Foreign Investments, was held Friday.

Addressing the symposium, which was held as part of a special programme agreed upon by the Jordanian embassy in Tokyo and the UNIDO office, was Jordanian Ambassador to Japan Farouq Qasrawi, who reviewed the latest government measures and facilities to encourage investments in Jordan.

Also addressing the symposium was Director of the Studies Unit at the Investment Encouragement Department Mohammad Jawabrah, who spoke about new Jordanian economic legislation, including the Investment Encouragement Law and related regulations, the revised Income Tax Law, and customs exemptions, all meant to promote foreign investment in Jordan.

A second symposium will be held on Aug. 1 in Osaka in cooperation with the International Trade Centre at Osaka.

U.S. seeks formula to keep Arabs, Israelis engaged

(Continued from page 1)

Netanyahu placed the Clinton administration in an awkward position for fear that a premature discussion of the issue, prior to the start of the final status negotiations, could seriously undermine the peace process.

"The administration has yet to find a way out of this awkward situation. It will have to reassure the Arabs that the peace process is meaningful but without casting doubts on its commitment to the security of Israel," said a well-informed American source. A group of over 150 rab-

bis, from the Jewish Peace Foundation, have called on the administration to cut down aid to Israel if the current government expanded the Israeli settlements but the Clinton administration was unlikely to heed such calls.

'Deputies to discuss ethics of journalism'

AMMAN (J.T.) — In another informal session, this one on Monday, deputies will look into the ethics of journalism, said Lower House Speaker Saad Hayel Srour.

In announcing the meeting on Thursday, Mr. Srour said the deputies are expected to discuss what he called "certain practices on the part of local newspapers concerning national unity and also some newspapers' coverage of topics that are considered offensive to the public taste and ethics of Islam."

"Such behaviour on the part of the press must be reviewed and scrutinised by parliament members who have a serious responsibility and duty to the nation under the Constitution, and to find practical solutions that would end such malpractices," added Mr. Srour.

Mr. Srour said "parliament is keen on enabling the local press to function in a climate of democracy and in a manner that would secure for the media the right atmosphere to carry out its mission in serving the nation."

The Monday meeting, he said, will be a good opportunity for the deputies to

exchange ideas on these two questions adding that "our responsibility is a common one as parliamentarians and we should cooperate in avoiding blunders and seek ways to put matters right through democratic dialogue."

It was during last week's informal parliament meeting in the presence of Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti that Mr. Srour brought up the idea of convening a special meeting to discuss these two issues.

Under the Press and Publication Law of 1992, "the media is restricted or prohibited from the publication of articles or materials that might harm national unity or instigate crime or increase hatred and conflict in society."

Parliament is currently in recess, but informed sources say that it will be summoned for an extraordinary session on July 15 during which only topics listed in a Royal Decree can be discussed, in accordance with the Constitution.

Tabloid editor to stand trial on slander charges

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Na'el Salah, editor of a weekly tabloid, will stand trial at the Amman Court of First Instance in the next few weeks on charges of slander and lack of accuracy in reporting. Mr. Salah was arrested Thursday at the Al-Haqika offices.

Prosecutor General Jamal Zogby said he issued the arrest order after the director of the Customs Department, Nazmi Abdullah, complained that the weekly newspaper, Al-Haqika (the Truth), published an article accusing Mr. Abdullah and the department employees of being involved in bribery. In its report, the four-month-old tabloid charged that the director of the Customs Department and its employees were committing violations and were accepting bribes.

According to Mr. Zogby, when interrogated, Mr. Salah said he had no sources or evidence to support his allegations in the article that was recently published and entitled "Serious violations in the Customs Department."

Mr. Zogby added that the

prosecution completed its investigations and that the case was transferred to the First Instance Court and a date will be set soon to start hearing the case.

The formal charges against Mr. Salah, 24, include overlooking objectivity, honesty and accuracy in reporting on news, publishing inaccurate news, slandering individuals, and tarnishing the reputation and dignity of public employees while performing their duties.

A request to free Mr. Salah on bail Thursday was turned down by the prosecutor general.

If convicted, Mr. Salah could be sentenced to up to two years in prison, Mr. Zogby told the Jordan Times Friday.

On Thursday Reporter Sans Frontiers, the Paris-based special interest group which promotes journalists' rights worldwide, appealed to His Majesty King Hussein to defend press freedoms and protested against the detention of Mr. Salah.

In a letter to the King the organisation said: "Reporters Sans Frontiers asks you to use your influence to secure the immediate release of Na'el Salah."

Fresh financing to boost economy

(Continued from page 1)

Dr. Mansour noted that the money will not be disbursed to the Kingdom in one lump sum saying that it will be transferred at each stage of the development of each project.

He said that most of the projects were proposed in the Middle East and North Africa economic summit (MENA) which was held in Amman in October 1995.

In a press conference on Thursday, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti told reporters that the aid to Jordan was accounted for in the budget adding that the decision to grant \$1 billion was conditional on Jordan's ability to continue with its International Monetary Fund (IMF)-sponsored economic reform programme.

The meeting in Paris, which was attended by 40 countries as well as the IMF, the World Bank and other international institutions, was the third to be organised by donor countries to study the Kingdom's economic performance.

Jordan this year started a new three-year economic reform programme which will allow it to receive \$295 million extended fund facilities in return for steps to further liberalise the economy.

An IMF official has recently said that the Kingdom was meeting the target of the IMF-agreed reforms and was heading towards attaining the 6.5 per cent economic growth forecast for 1996.

He added that Jordan was on track towards meeting its target of bringing its foreign reserves to \$600 million which can cover the import bill for three months.

The structural reform programme follows successful efforts for monetary stabilisation that were agreed with the IMF.

The Jordanian delegation to the meeting in Paris was headed by Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf who was accompanied by Minister of Finance Marwan Awad, Central Bank Governor Ziad Fariz, Economic Advisor at the Prime Ministry Basem Awadallah as well as other officials.

WHAT'S GOING ON	
Lecture	Basim Darwish entitled "The Time of Silence" at Dar Al-Funun, Jabal Westdeh. Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists, until July 31.
EXHIBITIONS	Black and White paintings exhibition of works conducted in half a century (1912-1966), entitled "Hundred Years" at the French Cultural Centre, until July 20.
	Ceramics exhibition at Jordan Design and Trade Centre, off Walk Samra Street, Tel. 6991412, until July 25.
	Exhibition of works by Sudanese artist at the University Road, until July 14.
	Korean Products Fair '96 at the University Road, until July 14.
	Exhibition of works by Japanese artist at the University Road, until July 14.

Russians bombard Chechen village

OUTSIDE GEKHI, Russia (R) — Russian planes dropped bombs on the Chechen village of Gekhi on Friday despite assurances by local people that rebel fighters had left it.

Reuters correspondent Alastair MacDonald saw three bombs hitting the village and sending orange clouds of smoke and dust into the skies. There was no immediate information on casualties.

Villagers, waiting in scorching sun at a military cordon and barred from returning to Gekhi, about 30 kilometres southwest of the Chechen capital Grozny, said there had been bombardments earlier in the day.

"I've spent 30 years building my house. I have six children to bring up. Where are we going to live now?" asked Zainabdin Guchegov, 54, watching the bombs fall.

Some Russian soldiers were already in the village, local people said.

Reporters were also stopped at the checkpoint two kilometres outside Gekhi.

Russian troops launched the attack on the village Tuesday, saying a big group of rebels was holed up there.

Residents say dozens of civilians have been killed in the attack and insist that the last fighter left Gekhi Thursday.

A weary stream of villagers fleeing their ruined homes ran into a bloodbath Thursday as escaping guerrilla fighters and Russian troops exchanged fire, eyewitnesses said.

Under a burning sun, hundreds of people were carrying their scant belongings on their backs or cars and driving dozens of cattle down the dusty road from Gekhi when the shooting started.

What happened next was a nightmare scene of screaming, running and falling refugees, panicking livestock and flying bullets that put more than 20 civilians in hospital and left an unknown number dead on the road.

Chechnya's fragile six-week truce erupted in a fierce battle Tuesday between local rebels, led by field Commander Doka Makhayev and Russian forces.

Russian air strikes left much of the village in ruins.

Reuters photographer Vladimir Svartsevich, who was at the scene Thursday, said it appeared that a group of separatist guerrillas was attempting to escape the army's encirclement of Gekhi by mingling with the refugees.

Some he saw later appeared to have shaved off the tell-tale beards of Chechnya's mostly Muslim fighters.

Accounts varied as to who opened fire first.

But the witnesses agreed that a group of rebels armed with automatic rifles and grenade launchers exchanged fire with a squad of local Omon commanders, who opened up with a heavy machinegun mounted on their armoured personnel carrier.

Mr. Svartsevich counted up to seven black-clad guerrillas, though there may have been more.

The casualty toll was unclear. The chief doctor at the district hospital in Urus-Martani said he had admitted more than 20 wounded.

Russian military sources said Commander Makhayev was

among the fighters killed in the shootout, but this could not be confirmed.

The incident put an unbearable strain on the local hospital which, like most in Chechnya after 19 months of war, lacks virtually everything, from drugs to anaesthetics to a working plumbing system.

The chaos Thursday was intensified by a rumour that a group of guerrillas had been seen near Urus-Martani, which provoked fears of a hostage-taking similar to those at hospitals in two other southern Russian towns in the past year.

It was symptomatic of the frayed nerves of this region, where few are ready to believe the brief calm that preceded President Boris Yeltsin's reelection was anything other than an electoral gimmick, a pause before a new round of fighting.

Mr. Svartsevich said he saw a number of people rush to the hospital and take away sick or wounded relatives, for fear they would be caught up in a new battle.

Police sealed the building. There was no sign of the fighters.

Meanwhile, after months of kid-glove treatment before polls which restored President Yeltsin to power, Washington Thursday blamed Moscow for a fresh flare-up in Chechnya and deplored new attacks on civilians.

The comments, by Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns, appeared to mark a shift in the administration's willingness to publicly call Mr. Yeltsin's government to account over policy differences.

"I think it just stands to reason that there has been some kind of decision in the (Russian) government to take a different tack because there was a lull in the fighting throughout the latter part of the presidential campaign," Mr. Burns told a news briefing.

"We are dismayed at the recent escalation of fighting, and dismayed that there is continued military fire directed at civilians" in the breakaway Chechnya region of the Caucasus, he said.

Mr. Talbott offered a similar assessment of U.S. policy on Chechnya in comments to the U.S.-Russia Business Council earlier Thursday.

"We feel Chechnya can only be resolved by political means."

We have made clear that we regret, are concerned about and oppose the brutal and excessive use of force that has resulted in the 25,000-30,000 mostly civilian casualties," Mr. Talbott said.

He said this would continue to be U.S. policy as Mr. Yeltsin "continues to grapple with this very difficult issue."

Mr. Burns, for his part, also called on Chechen separatist rebels to tone down the violence. "It does take two sides to make a war, and we do call upon the Chechen rebels themselves to find a way towards de-escalating this conflict and a way towards the negotiating table," he said.



Chechen rebels carry an injured woman attempting to escape from the village of Gekhi, some 35 kilometres south of Grozny. Russian President Boris Yeltsin's pre-election pledges to end the war in Chechnya appear to have come to nothing as fighting rages anew and talk of peace has given way to harsh rhetoric and more bloodshed and refugees (Reuters photo)

1 death confirmed in U.S. park rockslide as teams comb rubble

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — Rescue teams searched for more victims at California's scenic Yosemite National Park where a huge rockslide brought thousands of trees crashing down, killing one person and injuring at least seven.

A 200-ft (60 metre) arch of granite high on a mountain side gave way Wednesday evening, creating a powerful blast of displaced air as it fell and uprooting some 2,000 trees near the popular Happy Isles area of the vast park in the Sierra Nevada.

Park spokesman Bill Groth said one person died, struck by a falling tree, and the body was being recovered. He could not identify the victim or say if it was a man or a woman.

Two seriously-injured young women were flown to hospitals in nearby Modesto. Mr. Groth said "numerous" people with minor injuries were treated at a clinic at Yosemite and released. Most suffered severe dust inhalation, he said.

Other officials put the injured total at seven.

Park Ranger Scott Gediman said the rock fell "as a big chunk," creating a tremendous wind. "This

wind came and the velocity knocked down ... about 2,000 trees," he said.

More than four million people visit the 1,170 square mile (3,030 sq. km) park each year to see its spectacular mountain scenery and waterfalls, hike, climb or camp. The park, 150 miles (240 kilometres) east of San Francisco, is in its busy summer vacation period, when about 20,000 people a day visit.

The debris destroyed a snack bar but a nearby nature centre was undamaged. Both facilities had closed for the night, but there were still hikers in the area enjoying the last hours of daylight.

"We are very fortunate it wasn't worse," park spokeswoman Mary Vocelka said. Shaken visitors compared the noise of the rockslide to an earthquake, a freight train or "a squadron of 747s" going by.

"We heard this tremendous popping and noise. Where we were sitting, we could see the rocks start falling ... We were all just very frightened. Everyone starts running," one woman who was at a nearby campground told San Francisco's KCBS Radio.

The rockslide sent a thick

cloud of dust thousands of feet into the air. The cloud took about 45 minutes to settle, hampering early rescue efforts.

Rescue workers returned to the area at first light after stopping the search at midnight Wednesday.

Park Ranger Rick Smith said the search teams would look for more victims and assess the damage. Park officials were not expecting to find any more victims. "We've accounted for most every one," he said.

California Gov. Pete Wilson ordered members of the California Urban Search and Rescue team to Yosemite to search for anyone who may have been trapped, his office said. The team, equipped with trained dogs, fiberoptic cameras and other high-technology equipment, arrived early Thursday.

About 150 people were involved in the search and helicopters flew overhead surveying the area. Two minor rockslides were reported in the vicinity overnight, raising concerns about the stability of the rocks.

The area around the rockslide was sealed off to the public but the rest of the park was open.



The Queen Mother (lower right) and the Princess of Wales (left) are positioned one seat apart as they stand for the National Anthem, at the Royal Tournament at Earls Court Thursday (Reuters photo)

Charles, Diana agree to divorce

LONDON (AP) — Prince Charles and Princess Diana announced Friday that they have agreed on a swift divorce, after 3 1/2 years of separation and public sniping and a decade or more of unhappiness.

The split, which their lawyers said would be final Aug. 28, brings an end to a soap opera of tears, betrayal and bullying.

Proceedings will be initiated in court Monday and a preliminary decree of divorce is expected that day, said a statement from Mishcon De Reya, the firm representing Princess Diana.

Princess Diana, 35, relinquishes any claim to one day being queen of England. But she will still be a wealthy princess living in a palace, free to pursue her dream of being "a queen in people's hearts."

That role will be subject to the queen's consent. "As for any other member

of the royal family, any activity of the princess which involves the use of public funds will be undertaken only with the permission of the sovereign acting where necessary on the advice of ministers," Buckingham Palace said.

Prince Charles, 47, the heir of Queen Elizabeth II, stands to be the first divorcee on the English throne since George I, who reigned from 1714 to 1727.

The announcement came just before the couple's 15th wedding anniversary on July 29.

She will retain her apartments at Kensington Palace, a Buckingham Palace spokesman said, but her office will be moved out of St. James's Palace, where Prince Charles is based.

Princess Diana agreed to relinquish the title of "Her Royal Highness," to be known in future as Diana, Princess of Wales. Theoretically, she would be obliged to curtsy to her sons — Prince William, 14, and Prince Harry, 11 — who both carry the HRH title.

On Thursday Princess Diana joined Queen Mother Elizabeth for their first public meeting in 18 months, but there seemed to be a chill in the air.

The 95-year-old queen mother, grandmother of Prince Charles, invited Princess Diana and her sons to the royal box for a musical military tournament.

The two women did not seem to talk, and for a brief, awkward moment before the show, a red and gold chair stood empty between them.

British newspapers have reported that the queen mother blames Princess Diana for many of the troubles that have plagued the royal family in recent years.

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Couple to be tried for son's suicide

ROME (R) — An Italian couple whose son killed himself after they tried to stop him seeing his girlfriend have been ordered to stand trial in connection with his death, newspapers reported Thursday. They said a magistrate in the port of Bari, southern Italy, had indicted the couple on charges of mistreatment resulting in death, menaces and unlawful restraint. The couple, who were not named, will stand trial in November. Their 20-year-old son, identified only as Angelo, gassed himself in his car outside his girlfriend Mary's home in April last year. The reports said his parents considered the girl not good enough for their son and had put huge psychological pressure on them to end their love affair.

Chic French resort to give tops to the topless

CANNES, France (R) — The French Riviera resort of Cannes is to hand out tops to the topless in a drive to stop tourists wandering its streets naked to the waist. Home of a celebrated annual film festival, Cannes is famous for topless starlets on its beach. But the local council is determined to confine toplessness to the beach for the sake of the town's image. From Friday until Aug. 31, it plans to distribute T-shirts in the town's colours to anyone caught with a bare torso in the streets. A local by-law forbids people from walking in the town "in a bathing suit, bare-chested or indecently dressed."

Argentine man kills self in undertaker's office

MAR DEL PLATA, Argentina (R) — A 65-year-old Argentine man walked into an undertaker's office and, after being reassured that his insurance would cover a funeral, shot himself dead on the spot. Juan Hansen handed the office attendant a letter to his family saying he was tired of suffering from an undisclosed illness and did not want to be a burden, the state-run Telam news agency reported. He shot himself in the temple before the employee could finish reading the letter, and dropped dead onto the desk, the agency said of Tuesday's incident.

Actor charged with spousal abuse

LOS ANGELES (R) — Actor Harry Morgan, best known for his role as Col. Sherman Potter in the television series *Mash*, was charged with beating his wife, an attorney said. Deputy City Attorney Mitchell Fox said the misdemeanor spousal battery charge arose from an incident at the couple's home in the Brentwood area earlier this month when Barbara Morgan, 70, called police to say her 81-year-old husband of nearly 10 years was attacking her. He said officers responding to the call shortly after midnight on July 2 heard a woman yelling and screaming before they were let into the house by the actor.

Human skulls seized from Indian river

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Indian police have seized more than 400 human skulls from a river in the eastern state of Bihar, newspapers reported Tuesday. The skulls were dumped in four sacks in the Faigu River in Gaya region, home to Buddhist shrines, and the police were alerted to them Monday by residents, the dailies said. The Hindustan Times quoted police as saying the skulls were about one year old, but it was not clear how they came to be in the river.

Indian passenger airliner crashes; 9 people killed

NEW DELHI, India (AP) — A small airliner crashed near a Himalayan resort town Thursday, killing all the nine people on board, Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency reported. Among the victims were three Japanese tourists.

Rescue teams recovered all the bodies, which were charred beyond recognition. PTI and United News of India (UNI) news agencies said.

Two helicopters from a nearby city hovered over the area, but were unable to land because of clouds, PTI reported quoting Yogesh Chandra, the highest official in the Civil Aviation Ministry in New Delhi.

The charred wreckage of the Archana Airways 17-seat L-410 aircraft was found near Kulu, about 500 kilometres (310 miles) north of New Delhi.

The plane left New Delhi for Kulu via Shimla, the capital of the mountainous state of Himachal Pradesh.

The plane took off from Shimla 8.33 a.m. (0303 GMT) and lost contact with the Kulu control tower 21 minutes later.

Villagers saw the aircraft exploding in midair and

falling, informed the local police, Press Trust of India said.

The news agency quoted Mr. Chandra as saying the plane hit a tree, slammed into a hill and crashed into a house. Three people on the ground sustained minor injuries, it said.

No snags were detected when the plane underwent mandatory technical checks in New Delhi, the reports said.

Rescue teams have recovered the cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder and have sent the instruments to laboratories for deciphering, the reports said.

The government also ordered an inquiry into the crash to be conducted by the Air Safety Directorate.

Kulu is a popular destination for tourists escaping the summer heat of the northern plains.

In New Delhi, Archana Airways gave the names of the Japanese as Hidekazu Omi, a man, and Kiyoko Omi and C. Yamamoto, both women.

The other victims were three Indian passengers and three crew members.

Colombia slams U.S. move against Samper

BOGOTA, Colombia (R) — Colombia strongly protested Washington's decision Thursday to bar embattled President Ernesto Samper from entering the United States because of his alleged ties to drug lords.

"This is the act of an empire against what they (the U.S.) consider to be some little republic," Interior Minister Horacio Serpa, Mr. Samper's right-hand man, told a news conference.

"It's open, clear and inadvisable intervention in the internal affairs of Colombia," he added, saying Washington was "Repeating the story of the big stick that the U.S. government wields with such misfortune."

Alluding to what Mr. Samper himself has described as growing anti-American sentiment in Colombia, Mr. Serpa predicted that Washington's public humiliation of the Colombian leader would backfire if it was aimed at forcing

him to step down. "The government is going to strengthen because Colombians are going to surround their president," he said.

Neighbouring Venezuela said the U.S. move was regrettable.

"We regret what has happened with the Colombian president because it deals with not just an ordinary citizen but with the head of state," Venezuelan Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Burelli Rivas said.

A Colombian government statement issued shortly before Mr. Serpa's news conference also called the U.S. decision "unacceptable" meddling in Colombia's affairs. It added that Mr. Samper intended to address the U.N. General Assembly in New York in September, with or without his U.S. entry visa.

The cancellation of that visa was announced in Washington by the State Department.

Dole defends civil rights record in NAACP row

NEW YORK (R) — Republican presidential aspirant Bob Dole, stung by attacks for rejecting a chance to speak at the NAACP Thursday defended his civil rights record as "flawless" but criticised the organisation's leader.

In New York before meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Sen. Dole was asked in a radio interview about not addressing the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People annual meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina.

"We had a scheduling conflict," Sen. Dole said on the Imus In The Morning, nationally syndicated radio show with host Don Imus.

"We can't do everything. I've got a flawless civil rights record but let's face it — the leader of the NAACP, Mr. (Kweisi) Mfume, is not known as a moderate Democrat, a nonpartisan Democrat. He was one of the leading liberal Democrats."

The former Kansas senator said he hoped to meet with black leaders of the organisation at some time and expected to get black votes in his campaign against President Bill Clinton, who spoke to the NAACP, the nation's oldest civil rights organisation.

"We'll figure some way to meet with the board of directors, or something, of the NAACP," Sen. Dole said. "I think some are my friends. I don't know that Mfume is one of them."

Mr. Mfume is a former Democratic congressman from Maryland and, one-time outspoken head of the congressional black caucus, a group that criticised Sen. Dole for not speaking to the

NAACP.

If he had given a speech, Sen. Dole agreed with Sen. John McCain, R-Arizona, who was on the programme earlier, that he probably would have received an unenthusiastic response.

"That probably would have been the case, although I must say, as I said in my (Senate) resignation speech, people look at Republicans ... they think we don't care about people, whether they are disabled, or skin colour or whatever."

"I voted for civil rights going way back to 1964," he said.

Among those who suggested Sen. Dole should have addressed the group was retired Gen. Colin Powell, who said it would have been useful for Sen. Dole to have talked to the NAACP.

"Hopefully," Sen. Dole added, "We'll be able to attract a good percentage of black votes. In fact we found a lot of black support travelling around the country going from place to place."

Democrats in modern elections have attracted an overwhelming majority of black voters.

Sen. Dole also said in the interview that he hoped 1992 independent presidential candidate Ross Perot stays out of the race this year. "I would hope he wouldn't run. I hope it's going to be sort of a two-person race."

Although polls show Sen. Dole between 15 and 20 percentage points behind Mr. Clinton, Sen. Dole said the race was tightening.

"The polls are closing all across America," Sen. Dole said. "We think it's an 8 to 10 point race now."

Crew rescued from blazing ship off U.K.

LONDON (R) — Twenty-seven seamen, most of them Indian, were brought safely ashore Friday after being rescued from their blazing cargo ship in the English Channel.

One crew member of Cypriot-registered CSAV Tolten was taken to hospital in Torbay, southwest England, with minor injuries, a Coast Guard official said.

The crew of 24 Indians, two Ukrainians and one Burmese took to the lifeboats after fire broke out shortly after midnight.

Navy vessels and helicopters were scrambled and the men were finally picked up by two local fishing boats.

The Tolten, which was carrying 12,500 tonnes of copper and several containers, was still ablaze Friday morning 20 miles off start point on the Devon coast.



...stand near the engine ... Florida - Reuters photo

S. F-16 jet flies

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N. Ireland by protes

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Hurricane on approach

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... thousands of ... along the North and ... Carolina coasts were ... evacuation orders and ... shelters were ... authorities urged ... to brace for ... rain and hurricane ...

... top winds dropped ... mph (128 kph). ... it remained a giant ... 400 miles wide (644 ...

... a northerly turn ... spared the ... Georgia coast, which ... evacuated some 250 ...



Firefighters stand near the engine of a downed F-16 U.S. Air Force jet that crashed into a house Thursday, in Pensacola, Florida (Reuter photo)

U.S. F-16 jet fighter crashes in residential area

PENSACOLA, Florida (R) — An F-16 jet fighter being flown from South Carolina to avoid hurricane Bertha crashed into a residential neighbourhood in this Florida city Thursday, destroying one house and damaging another, officials said.

The injured woman, identified as Robin Cannon, 31, was sent to West Florida Regional Medical Centre, a local hospital, where she was stabilised before being airlifted to the burn unit at the University of South Alabama in Mobile, Alabama. A spokeswoman at West Florida Regional said Mr.

Cannon was in stable condition. She had no other information about any other crash victims being brought to that hospital. Military officials said the jet was flying to Eglin Air Force Base near Pensacola, at the western end of Florida's panhandle, from Shaw Air Force Base, near Sumter, South Carolina when it crashed. The aircraft went down at about 3:30 edt (1930 GMT), said an Eglin Air Force Base spokeswoman. "We do

know that it did go down. The pilot ejected," she said, adding that the base had sent a crew to investigate. A spokeswoman for the Pensacola Police Department said police had been told the plane was loaded with munitions, and that the pilot had ejected safely. Homes in the area surrounding the crash site were being evacuated as the air force searched for the jet's weapons. Pensacola police said.

N. Ireland peace shaken by protests, shootings

BELFAST (R) — Northern Ireland's peace process appeared in jeopardy Friday after a wave of violent protests in which gunmen shot and wounded three policemen.

Police allowed another Protestant hardliners' march to go ahead through a Catholic area of Belfast Friday after a night of Catholic protests against the annual Orange Order marches.

The overnight violence erupted after police reversed a ban on an orange order parade through a Roman Catholic section of Portadown, south of Belfast, Thursday.

During the night youths hijacked vehicles and set them ablaze to protest against what they said was the trampling of their rights by activists of the Protestant majority.

Police said 40 civilians and 11 police officers were hurt in six hours of rioting in Londonderry. Northern Ireland's largely Catholic second city. More than 900 petrol bombs were thrown. Police replied with plastic bullets.

Martin McGuinness of Sinn Fein, the political wing of the IRA, said Friday the police decision to allow the marches left little expectations of the peace process.

"The British government and the Unionist political leadership are not interested in even negotiating a route through a Catholic area," said Mr. McGuinness.

"If they're not interested in negotiating a route through a Catholic area, it's hardly likely they're going to negotiate the fundamental political and constitutional change we all know is required if there is to be future peace in this country."

Cardinal Cahal Daly, leader of Ireland's Catholics, Friday attacked the decision to let the Portadown march proceed.

"This was a wrong decision, a disastrously wrong decision. I feel it will have very negative consequences..." Card. Daly said in a radio interview. "I, with regret, have to

say that I feel betrayed, betrayed by the British government."

Irish Prime Minister John Bruton, Britain's partner in efforts to find a peace deal, has also told British Prime Minister John Major the decision was mistaken.

Mr. Bruton told Mr. Major of the "widespread anger and deep concern in Ireland about the decision," Dublin officials said. The overnight violence and the shootings mark a serious turn for the worse in the situation in Northern Ireland.

Police said two officers were shot overnight in the mainly Catholic, Irish nationalist Ardoyne area of Belfast and a third was hit in the New Lodge area, another Catholic stronghold.

None of the injuries was life-threatening and two were later released from hospital, a police spokesman said.

No group claimed responsibility for shooting the three policemen, who were thought to be the first victims of sniper attacks in the province since IRA guerrillas called a truce in August 1994 in its war against British rule of Northern Ireland.

On Friday, lines of riot police, backed by troops, threw a security cordon around the lower Ormeau Road near the centre of Belfast, keeping Roman Catholic residents off the road.

Roman Catholic residents, some of whom were hemmed into their homes by armoured police vehicles, shouted taunts at police and marchers as the parade went through.

Northern Ireland has enjoyed an uneasy calm since the ceasefire, which was matched soon after by Protestant loyalists, who want the province to stay British.

The Irish Republican Army resumed its war in February with a series of bombings in London but has not mounted any attacks in Northern Ireland.

Hurricane Bertha weakens on approach to U.S. coast

WILMINGTON, N.C. (R) — Hurricane Bertha weakened Thursday as it chugged toward the Carolina coast after sending thousands of vacationers packing and forcing residents to board up homes and hoard supplies.

Hundreds of thousands of people along the North and South Carolina coasts were under evacuation orders and emergency shelters were opened as authorities urged homeowners to brace for heavy rain and hurricane-force winds Friday. But the storm's top winds dropped to 80 mph (128 kph), though it remained a giant about 400 miles wide (640 kilometres).

Bertha's northerly turn Wednesday spared the Olympic yachting venue on the Georgia coast, which had evacuated some 250

athletes and staff from a marina on Wilmington Island. Tom Fisher, a spokesman for the Olympic yachting events, said athletes would return to the site Friday to resume practice for the Olympics, due to start late next week.

South Carolina ordered evacuation of beachfront residents in Horry and Georgetown counties, including the popular resort town of Myrtle Beach. The order did not include the historic coastal city of Charleston. Officials estimated there are 300,000 tourists on the state's coast at this time of year.

"I ask all of you to please protect yourselves and your families by moving inland immediately," South Carolina Gov. David Beasley said in a statement. "We will be in your neighbour-

hoods to watch over your homes while you are gone."

North Carolina evacuated its outer banks, affecting an estimated 50,000 residents and tourists, and heavy traffic clogged the two-lane coastal roads. In Wilmington, North Carolina, where forecasters predicted Bertha would likely come ashore Friday afternoon, gas stations and grocery stores were jammed.

"I bought film to take before and after pictures for insurance purposes, in case there's damage," said 25-year-old Michael Satrazemis. The fringes of the storm reached Wrightsville Beach near Wilmington Thursday afternoon. Heavy surf gobbled up chunks of the beach, and police went door-to-door, telling people to leave.

China offers more food aid to N. Korea

BEIJING (R) — China has offered 100,000 tonnes of food to North Korea to prevent famine after floods destroyed crops last year, injecting new warmth into ties between the Communist neighbours that had cooled in recent years.

"The Chinese Communist Party and the government decided to provide further free grain aid to (North) Korea to ease its domestic grain shortages," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

"Our main aim is to demonstrate the friendship between China and North Korea," an official of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation told Reuters. In line with that friendship, China decided to give North Korea 100,000 tonnes in food aid to mark the 35th anniversary of a treaty of friendship and mutual assistance, he said.

"The type of aid and the time of delivery have yet to be decided," the trade official said, adding that it was too early to say whether delivery of the food would be completed in 1996.

The aid was announced by Chinese state councillor Luo Gan at a meeting with North Korean Vice President Ri Jong-Ok in Pyongyang Thursday.

China earlier announced 10,000 tonnes of rice and a similar amount of corn in food aid to Pyongyang in a package to help North Korea after the worst floods in a century ravaged much of the country last year. The United Nations has launched a \$43.6 million appeal for food aid for North Korea, widely reported to be on the brink of famine.

The latest food package appeared to signal an upswing in relations between China and North Korea, once described as being "as close as lips and teeth."

Ties cooled after Beijing forged diplomatic links with Seoul in 1992. Several years ago, China started insisting on hard cash from Pyongyang for grain and other goods, moving away from barter trade and dealing a serious blow to the North Korean economy.

New bus bomb injures 20 in Moscow; extra forces drafted in

MOSCOW (R) — Russian authorities ordered more than 1,000 extra Interior Ministry troops into Moscow Friday after a bomb tore through a trolleybus in the morning rush-hour — the second such attack in two days.

The blast, caused by a bomb left under a seat on the bus in the northeast of the city, injured more than 20 people, some of them seriously, police and health officials said.

Police withdrew an early report that one person had been killed.

President Boris Yeltsin, reelected nine days ago to four more years in office, called immediately for tough action against terrorism. He said the city of nine million people was "infested with terrorists."

Moscow authorities announced a crackdown on undesirables in the city, particularly on ethnic groups from the Caucasus region where the Chechnya conflict is raging.

Interior Ministry troops Commander Anatoly Shkirko said he was drafting more than 1,000 extra men into the capital to help city police ensure public safety.

Moscow's Mayor Yuri Luzhkov said Friday's blast was caused by a bomb made of 300 grammes (more than half a pound) of TNT left under a seat in the centre of a No. 48 bus.

"We are witnessing a system of terrorist acts," Mr. Luzhkov told a news conference after visiting the scene of the blast on Prospekt Mira, a thoroughfare in the northeast of the city.

State security officials at the scene said the bomb had been left in a sports bag similar to that containing a bomb which exploded Thursday on another trolleybus closer to the city centre. Five people were injured in that attack.

The single-deck trolleybuses, which draw power from overhead cables and lumber slowly through the city, are a popular and easy mode of hop-on, hop-off transport for thousands of Muscovites.

Mr. Luzhkov said there



Experts work inside a blown-up trolleybus on Prospekt Mira (Peace Avenue) in Moscow Friday (Reuter photo)

could be two explanations for the bombings.

One was that the attacks were linked to threats by Chechen independence fighters to bring their struggle to the capital. The other was that the criminal world was responding to latest measures by Mr. Yeltsin and his security supremo, General Alexander Lebed, to step up the fight against crime in Moscow.

"With a certain degree of certainty we can see a possible Chechen line and it is not an idle thought," Mr. Luzhkov said.

In comments that boded ill for ethnic Caucasians in Moscow, as well as the capital's criminals, Mr. Luzhkov said: "We intend to cleanse Moscow not only of homeless down-and-outs but also those elements that we consider dangerous."

ITAR-TASS news agency said it was clear from Mr. Luzhkov's comments that measures would be taken against "visiting from the south" — a euphemism meaning people from the north Caucasus region as well as from the independent Transcaucasian states.

Officials stressed Friday that there was no hard evidence to tie the blasts to Chechen rebels. Kremlin troops have been bogged

down in bitter fighting in Chechnya against separatists since December 1994.

Asked if there could be a link to the Chechnya conflict, a state security spokesman said Friday: "I would not hurry to this conclusion. Possibly it was linked to the one yesterday."

Mr. Yeltsin made his remarks to top state security officials as he presented Nikolai Kovalyov as the new director of the Federal Security Service (FSB), successor to the KGB police.

The carbon-copy bombing Friday appeared to lay down a particular challenge to Gen. Lebed, who Wednesday was given the task of fighting crime in the capital by Mr. Yeltsin.

Bombers also struck on Moscow's underground railway on June 11 in an attack in which four people were killed and many injured.

The latest bomb was sure to heighten tension in the capital, which is recovering from a bruising presidential election campaign in which law-and-order and the growing crime wave was a top issue.

Temperatures of people are also frayed by a heatwave which has driven temperatures up to 35 centigrade

(95 Fahrenheit).

Trolleybus No. 48 was turned into a scorched hulk of twisted metal by the blast. Blood splattered the pavement. Shards of glass were scattered over a wide area.

An eyewitness said passengers scrambled to get out through the windows after the blast.

"I woke up when I heard the bang and saw the trolleybus standing there. People were trying to get out of the window, to get out, however, they could. It was terrible, painful," said Viktor Shlyakhtin.

President Yeltsin, speaking after the second bomb attack, called Friday for tough action against terrorism in the Russian capital, Interfax News Agency reported.

Mr. Yeltsin told senior officials of the Federal Security Service that Moscow was "infested with terrorists" and firm measures had to be taken together with city authorities, Interfax said.

ITAR-TASS quoted Mr. Yeltsin as saying he had signed a decree on fighting terrorism in Russia but it gave no details.

A separate Interfax report said Moscow police had stepped up patrols in the city after Friday's blast.

Heavy fighting resumes in Liberian countryside

MONROVIA (AP) — Fierce fighting this week in eastern Liberia has driven thousands from their homes, while disease is ravaging the ranks of refugees from earlier fighting.

The latest territorial battle is between Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia and George Boley's Liberia Peace Council in the provincial town of Zwedru, 180 miles (290 kilometres) southeast of the capital, Monrovia, military sources said Thursday.

The four-day battle intensified Wednesday when Mr. Boley's fighters moved in from the port city of Greenville, 130 miles (200 kilometres) southeast of Monrovia, and launched a fierce assault on Mr. Taylor's po-

sitions in Zwedru.

Earlier this week, an estimated 3,000 Liberians fleeing fighting in surrounding Grand Bedeh county crossed into the Ivory Coast border town of Tabou, which is already crammed with tens of thousands of refugees from the 6 1/2-year civil war.

Monrovia itself remains calm following nearly two months of fighting in April and May that wrecked much of the city and killed hundreds of people. A truce took hold on May 27 and militiamen left the city, but their return to the countryside has led to renewed fighting in several regions.

Disease is sweeping through the ranks of refugees. Cholera and m...

claimed scores of lives among 20,000 displaced people in northern Margibi county following the closure last month of the only clinic operated by the relief agency, Doctors Without Borders.

Local health workers told reporters Thursday that at least 10 people have been dying each day since the epidemics broke out two weeks ago. Most of the victims have been children.

Meanwhile, international relief agencies have accused Albah Kromah's ULIMO-K rebel factions of holding hundreds of people hostage to attract help from humanitarian groups and then keeping the food for their militiamen.

Doctors Without Borders

and the French aid group Action Against Famine said in a news release that 1,300 displaced people were rounded up by ULIMO-K and taken to the town of Suebn, 19 miles (30 kilometres) north of Monrovia.

"Apparently, the faction wants to attract humanitarian assistance, food aid in particular, by starving the detainees," the news release said.

A ULIMO-K representative denied the charges and said the displaced people had come to them seeking refuge. The group had only put out calls for humanitarian assistance so they could feed the displaced, the representative said.

Brixton dances for joy to welcome hero Mandela

LONDON (R) — Nelson Mandela was feted by thousands of cheering, dancing blacks as Brixton in South London gave an ecstatic welcome to the South African president on the emotional high point of his state visit to Britain.

Mr. Mandela beamed broadly throughout his 80-minute tour of the rundown inner city area, home to one of Britain's biggest black communities. He said it was the "fulfilment of a dream" to finally visit Brixton.

After dancing joyfully with a women's group, he was mobbed on his first walkabout of the four-day tour through a local market. His motorcade was swamped by crowds wanting to touch the hand of their hero.

People stood 10 to 15 deep behind barriers, on rooftops and on the platforms of a railway station overlooking the Brixton Recreation Centre where Mr. Mandela's visit started.

"We want Nelson, we want Nelson," the crowd chanted as Mr. Mandela, accompanied by heir to the throne Prince Charles, climbed the steps to receive a bouquet of flowers and a kiss from a local black girl.

In the streets below, dancing crowds spread as far as the eye could see as reggae music blasted out of a huge sound system. A giant sign on the front of the centre read "siyakwamkela madiba e Brixton", welcoming the 77-year-old South African leader.

In a short speech Mr. Mandela said he had been looking forward for months to his visit to Brixton.

"It is literally a fulfilment of a dream that I have been a visitor to this place," Mr. Mandela said.

"Although many of you in this audience are comparatively young and may not have taken part in the anti-apartheid struggle, I want to tell you that Britain, especially London and the com-

munity of Brixton, were the heartland of the anti-apartheid struggle.

"You...regarded that as your own struggle and it gives me great pleasure to be able to stand on this soil and be able to thank you for what you did."

"I want to show I love each and everyone of you without exception," said Mr. Mandela, triggering a chorus of "we love you" from the multi-racial crowd in the centre.

Mr. Mandela has been lionised by royalty, parliament and above all the people on a state visit which has featured unparalleled scenes of excitement and hero-worship among reserved Britons.

Inside the centre, entertained by a steel band and a gospel choir, Mr. Mandela was shown how Brixton, hit by racial tension and riots in the 1980s, was trying to entice employers to the area and give young people a sense of purpose.

Much work is being done by the prince's trust, Prince Charles's charity to assist disadvantaged young people.

After leaving Brixton, Mr. Mandela headed for Trafalgar Square, site of South Africa's diplomatic mission which was the focus of Britain's well-organised anti-apartheid movement.

Crowds streamed into central London to welcome Mr. Mandela, who was expected to speak from the balcony overlooking the square.

"It must not be forgotten that the masses of the people in this country and elsewhere, were in the forefront of the anti-apartheid struggle," Mr. Mandela said in an interview on his arrival in Britain.

"It is absolutely necessary, now that we have succeeded, to go and thank them for that contribution. And I am looking forward to going to Brixton."

Features

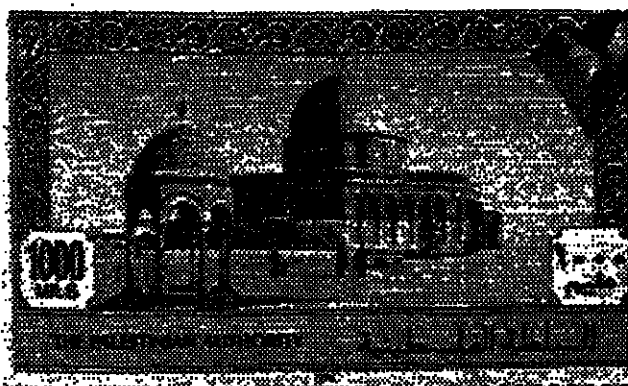
PNA stamps — growing pains for post offices, collectors

By Dr. Jay Levinson

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has begun issuing stamps and forwarding letters, a feat not without problems considering that there was no postal system and setting up one takes some pioneering effort.

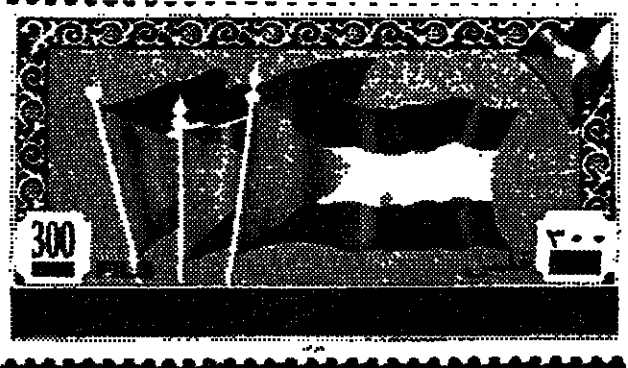
Following the Oslo accord, the nascent PNA printed a quick, definitive set of four stamps, each in another colour and depicting the national coat of arms. A larger multi-coloured series was then ordered, but problems quickly ensued. The difficulty was not the pictures, some of which were sites in Jerusalem which is not in the domain of the PNA. The series was printed in denominations from five to 1,000 mils. The Israeli objection was to the monetary unit, reminiscent of the old British Mandate coinage. So, the stamps in the large series were overprinted with same values, but now renamed mils.

As relates Ahmad Gharib, a veteran Gaza postal employee who started work in the Egyptian period before the June 1967 war and now heads the PNA Philatelic Bureau, the relatively few mils stamps,



which were not overprinted, are still valid for postage, but only within the PNA.

Wallach, a veteran Israeli collector, has ample examples of stamps used to the contrary.



They may not be used for postage from the PNA to Israel nor to destinations abroad. Those are the official rules, but Dr. Joseph

Not all problems have been caused by Israel. A souvenir sheet in mils was issued to herald the "Gaza-Jericho Peace Agreement."

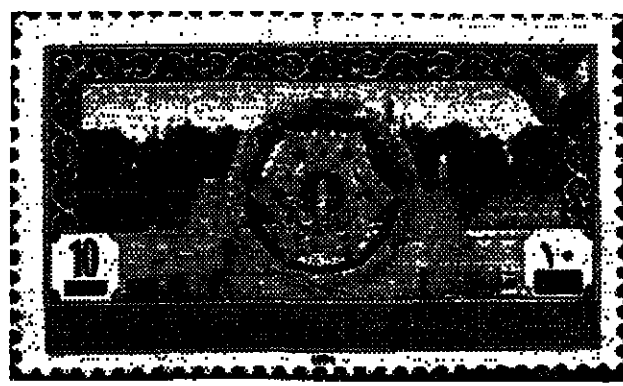
Pictured without names were Yasser Arafat, Yitzhak Rabin and Bill Clinton. When the instruction was received to change the monetary unit, the sheets were overprinted not only with "mils," but also "Nobel Peace Prize" and the names Arafat, Rabin and Peres.



The growing pains of the post office continued. The agreements with Israel specified very clearly that all stamps must clearly show the words "Palestinian National Authority". So it was with the next series on which "Palestinian National Authority" appears in both English and Arabic. The subject of the stamps, however, was reproductions of the British

Mandate stamps. This made newspaper headlines as some Israelis charged that the Mandate stamps labelled "Palestine" was a political tactic.

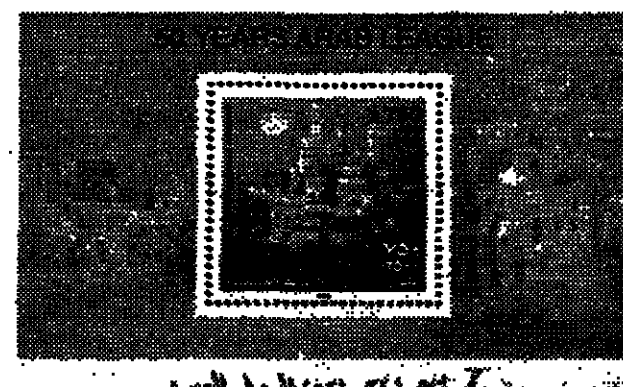
And there was another problem. After the issue of a commemorative series showing traditional cos-



on all the stamps in the series.

In Jordan, the Philatelic Bureau processes orders from around the world with standing orders for those who want all new issues.

Central Post Office. Orders for stamps can be processed, but there are no first day covers nor post office opening envelopes. Bookkeeping is also strictly manual, and one must send



That is the goal of the PNA Philatelic Bureau which is headquartered at the Gaza

cash by registered mail. According to Gharib, the banking system is not yet

set up to clearing cheques quickly.

Buying stamps in the post office in the PNA is not as simple as it sounds. Experience has shown that postal clerks tend to be friendly. The problem is purely philatelic. Not all stamps have been distributed to all post offices, so "buying everything" does not insure acquiring full sets of all issues. There are labels for airmail and registry, but there are still no aerogrammes, postcards or international reply coupons.

If you send a letter to the PNA, do not expect it to arrive quickly. Last month, this author sent a registered letter from Jerusalem to the post office in Gaza. The letter did arrive, three weeks later.

Slowly but surely the mail is moving. Originally, all PNA mail was forwarded via Israel. Now, most foreign mail still takes this route. Items to the Arab World, however, go directly from the West Bank via Jordan and from Gaza via Egypt.

So, if you see unusual stamps on letters in your mail, you know where they came from. There is only one more catch. The stamps show up only on postcards and letters. The PNA still

Indian barmaids gear up to oppose crackdown

By Clarence Fernandez
Reuters

BOMBAY — Sirobe lights revolve overhead, cutting the flared skirts of dancers swaying to the lilt of Indian love songs into brightly coloured segments.

Dust wafts in the light that swirls around the dancers and few drinkers in the bar seem to notice the smell of sweat and stale food that clings tightly about them.

But this typical night on the tiles for thousands of blue-collar workers who cannot afford Bombay's swankier watering holes may soon be a thing of the past.

The rightwing government of India's wealthiest state of Maharashtra has recently vowed to tighten enforcement of the regulations that govern the city's 55,000 bars.

Good-looking waitresses provide patrons a mild dose of titillation in an estimated 2,700 of these bars as they serve expensive liquor. Women also work as dancers and singers, belting out popular film songs.

But in the grey early hours of morning, some of the waitresses may satisfy clients' more basic needs,

too, the police believe.

"It is a cover for all kinds of things," said a top police official who did not want to be identified. "As the crime graph rises, we have no option but to check these activities."

Bombay's police force has decided to activate a 48-year-old law that bars women and children from working in commercial establishments after eight o'clock in the evening.

"Many of these places have licences for Indian classical dance performances," said the police officer. "But the shows often have no resemblance to anything Indian or classic."

The waitresses swear they will not give up without a fight.

"During the last few weeks, the police have started raiding the ladies' bars in the northeastern suburbs," said Anand Shetty, president of the Bar and Restaurant Working-Class Ladies' Association.

"Business has fallen off. Our customers are staying

away because they are scared of being arrested."

Mr. Shetty said his organisation, which has about 5,000 members, will take the fight to the courts. But first it plans to march on the state's legislative assembly, on July 10, in a bid to persuade the state's legislators to update the rules.

Ladies' bars, as they are colloquially known, provide employment to close on 40,000 women in a city of 13 million, Mr. Shetty estimated.

"There is no prostitution going on at the time of duty, I can assure you," Shetty said. "But what the women do after hours is their own concern."

Indian authorities' attitude to liquor, and pubs in general, is ambiguous. Sporadic crackdowns on bars, in line with a general national policy of prohibition, are apt to run out of steam when faced with opposition from local business.

An identical ban last year fizzled out after strong protest from the waitresses.

"Nightlife in Bombay comes to an end at the latest by one a.m.," said State Cultural Affairs Minister Pramod Navalkar, the moving spirit behind the new

ban.

"What is the need to be out after that? Our action is directed towards curbing anti-social activities, not the social life of the city," Mr. Navalkar added.

Some of the waitresses see the controversy as yet another hurdle in the way of their efforts to make a living.

"I make around 300 rupees on a good day," said Shobha, 31, who works as a waitress in a tiny bar in the northeastern suburb of Chembur.

Immaculately coiffed, she wore a dress that clung to her torso, flaring out at the hips. Jewels flashed at her ears and throat. Shobha smiled as she took a 100-rupee note out of the fingers of a patron, to hand it to the singer on the stage.

"I have to support my parents and three-year-old son alone after my husband died a year ago," she said. "I left school at thirteen. It's difficult to get a similar job anywhere else."

Shobha's neighbours think she works as an extra in the dance scenes in the films that Bombay's studios churn out each day.

Writer bridges different worlds through fiction

By Sonali Desai
Reuters

SINGAPORE — Singaporean author Ho Minfong looks entirely in her element addressing a large audience of teenage schoolgirls about the homesickness and nostalgia that first drove her to write.

More than 800 youngsters, many of them lost in the cushioned seats of their school hall, listen avidly, laughing with warm recognition at her jokes about "pushy boys" and bursting into applause as she slips unexpectedly into ancient Chinese verse.

Ms. Ho, who left her then-home in sub-tropical Thailand to go to school in wintry Ithaca, New York at the age of 16, said her first novel was born out of intense homesickness.

"I missed the very basic things of home: the leaves, the sun, people's skin ... 'Sing to the Dawn' was a way to bridge Ithaca and Bangkok."

Essentially a children's tale, "Sing to the Dawn" is about a Thai village girl who wins a scholarship to study in the city, but faces the resistance of her father

and brother while she grapples with her own insecurities about leaving home.

The book, widely studied in Singapore schools, was adapted recently into a musical by the Singaporean repertoire theatre in a cross-border collaboration between the U.S.-based Ho, British lyricist Stephen Clark and Singapore singer-composer Dick Lee.

Ms. Ho, in Singapore earlier this month to promote the musical at the launch of an international arts festival, admits that she has never entirely forgotten the initial wrench of leaving home. It's not difficult to see why: the 45-year-old writer has lived in Laos, Thailand, Singapore, Taiwan and Switzerland — and now makes her home in Ithaca with her husband and three children.

"Writing for me became a glue that I used to try and patch together the different parts of myself ... The Thai of my hands, the Cantonese of my heart, the English of my head," she tells her school audience.

Later, sitting across the sunny kitchen table in her parents' home, Ms. Ho is animated — and even more

relaxed before an audience of one.

"There are certain markers you come back to again and again. For me, it's been the sense of leaving home, the tension between too much freedom and too much definition," she observes.

It is the same tension the young Thai girl, Dawan, experiences in "Sing to the Dawn" as she finally wins the approval of her family and prepares to leave for the city.

"For me, the most powerful part of the book has always been the point at which dawon says to her grandmother: 'How can I take the sunset? How can I take the things that really matter to me — I don't know that I really want to go'." Ms. Ho says, her voice dipping to near silence.

In adapting for the stage a novel she wrote 20 years ago, Ms. Ho found herself pruning what she calls its more "didactic" aspects while dramatising Dawan's internal conflict into a full-fledged battle between the sexes.

Her other novels, "Rice without Rain" and "The

Clay Marble", deal with the effects of a student uprising and of the Cambodian war on villages in Thailand. They are also written from a young girl's perspective.

Noting that she frequently speaks at schools in the United States, she adds that her visits to girls' schools in Singapore hold a unique appeal.

"My books sell a lot more copies in the U.S., but there's never been the kind of warmth and enthusiasm there is from the girls here. For one thing, there are no girls' schools there."

"I like the fact that the stories they (Singapore schools) have used are all about empowering girls," she says.

Ms. Ho's decision more than 20 years ago to set up the Dawn Fellowship, using a portion of royalties, gave expression to her ideas about empowerment.

"The book has made it possible for some real Thai village girls to study and become nurses," she says in response to a student's question, adding with a smile: "So you see, it all weaves together."

North Koreans in Japan move out of isolation

By Yvonne Chang
Reuters

KOKUBUNJI, Japan (R) — North Korea's halting steps to end its international isolation are also spreading to the biggest overseas community of ethnic North Koreans.

The overseas Koreans do not have as far to travel as compatriots in their Communist homeland — just a step outside the pro-North Korean schools and college operating in Japan.

While the majority of graduates from the pro-Pyongyang Korean University in Japan aspire to become teachers at other pro-North schools inside Japan, some are starting to venture outside the estimated 250,000 pro-North Korean community in Japan.

"One of my former classmates recently went to Korea Town in America to study computer technology," said Oh Wong-Il, 21, a third-year student at the Korea University, in the western Tokyo suburb of Kokubunji.

A decade ago, it would have been unthinkable for a pro-Pyongyang Korean in Japan to cross the political aisle and join the pro-Seoul Korean community in Los Angeles.

Another graduate has gone even further and wholeheartedly embraced capitalism by taking a master of business administration (MBA) degree at a U.S. university.

Other graduates of the fiercely pro-Pyongyang college, adorned with portraits of Kim Jong-Il and Kim Il-Sung, work at Japanese firms to meet a growing demand for bilingual staff.

Still, the students wanting to come in from the cold are the exception and the majority of the 1,500 students at the college want to become teachers at other pro-North schools inside Japan to pass on their ethnic identity to the next generation.

"I think teachers play the most important role in enabling one to live as a Korean in Japan," Mr. Oh said. "I want to pass on what I learned from my teachers to the next generation."

While most pro-Seoul Kore-

an children in Japan attend Japanese schools, many of the 20,000 children of the pro-North community enter one of 145 schools run by the pro-Pyongyang General Association of Korean Residents in Japan, or Chongryon.

At the top of the pyramid of this chain of schools is the Korea University, the only university in Japan run by North Koreans to provide higher education for the community.

The courses consist largely of teaching the Korean language, culture and history modelled on what is taught in North Korean schools at this moment, down to Marxist economic theory.

The pro-North schools are a legacy of Japan's colonial rule of the Korean peninsula from 1910 to 1945. The Japanese brought 2.1 million Koreans to Japan as forced labourers.

After Japan's World War II defeat, a total of 600,000 Koreans decided to stay in Japan. They are split between 40 per cent who remain loyal to Pyongyang and 60 per cent who support South Korea.

In contrast to pro-South counterparts, employment

opportunities for pro-Pyongyang Koreans are still mostly limited to firms and organisations run by members of the community.

Pak Sam-Sok, professor of international relations at the university, blamed Japanese discrimination against Koreans, especially those loyal to Pyongyang.

"Discrimination against us is institutionalised," Mr. Pak said.

He singled out education laws which do not recognise North Korean schools and the 10 pro-Seoul Korean schools in Japan.

The law bans graduates of the schools from entering Japanese universities on the grounds that they have not received compulsory Japanese education.

Of the roughly 400 who graduate every year from the pro-Pyongyang high school in Tokyo, some 120 enter Korea University, and 180 seek employment.

The remainder try to enter Japanese universities, although only after enrolling with Japanese correspondence schools so they can technically

finish compulsory education.

Parents in the North Korean community are caught between wanting to provide ethnic education while offering wider career chances for children likely to remain permanently in Japan.

"Until the 1970s, North Koreans here thought of returning to their homeland. But today many have already financially and socially established themselves here," Mr. Pak said.

To accommodate calls for wider career possibilities, the association running the

schools revised the curriculum in 1993 to raise the standard of education to match that of Japanese schools, while keeping ethnic education intact.

The students are comfortable with the changes.

"The pace of integration in my generation is increasing. But being a Korean in Japan is my way of contributing to my North Korean homeland," said Mr. Oh.

Mr. Oh's classmate Pak Myong-Hwa agreed. "There will come a time when we can also present ourselves to the international scene."

ANNONCE DE L'AMBASSADE DE FRANCE

Monsieur Bernard BAJOLET, Ambassadeur de France en Jordanie, invite cordialement les français en Jordanie à la réception qu'il offrira à l'occasion de la Fête Nationale, le DIMANCHE 14 juillet 1996 de 19 H 30 à 21 H 30, à la Résidence de France à Amman. Les cartons d'invitation, qui seront exigés à l'entrée de la résidence, peuvent être retirés jusqu'au dimanche 14 juillet à 16 H 00 à l'Ambassade, sur présentation d'une carte d'identité.

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Smoke Free

European aid being squandered by bureaucracy

Rich countries slash aid to the poor, says new report

SYDNEY (AFP) — Aid contributions from 21 of the world's richest nations to some of the poorest fell in 1994 to their lowest level in 20 years, according to an international report.

The reality of aid report also found much of the aid still flowing goes toward securing commercial advantage and economic advancement of donor countries rather than addressing the basic needs of the poor.

It said eight of 21 members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) development assistance committee cut their contributions, as the share of aid to the poorest countries fell by seven per cent since 1990.

The report, the fourth study of aid funding by an international network of non-government organisations, was released here amid continuing controversy over Australia's decision to abolish an aid scheme which had provided soft loans tied to export contracts.

Four Asian nations — China, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines — protested to Canberra about its cancellation of the development import finance facility which cost Australia one billion dollars (\$800 million) in export contracts to save 120 million dollars a year.

The report finds that Australia had followed the lead of 20 other industrialised nations which had reduced their aid budgets in 1994 to

their lowest level in 20 years.

While Australia had increased aid in real terms in 1995/96, the aid still represented a historic low of 0.33 per cent of gross national product, compared with the United Nations' target of 0.7 per cent.

British Labour Party spokesman on development cooperation, Lord Frank Judd, a former director of the aid agency Oxfam U.K., rejected arguments by rich countries that they could not afford to increase or maintain aid contributions.

"When these things were pioneered, when it was seen as an issue of absolute moral priority that we must be tackling these issues, we weren't as wealthy as we are today," Mr. Lord Judd told reporters after releasing the report.

"It's not that we can't afford, we choose not to afford," he said. "We put a higher premium on selfishness than we do on pulling together as a human race."

He also appealed to governments not to shy away from intervening in market processes to safeguard common good and meet basic human needs.

Australian Council for Overseas Aid executive director Janet Hunt said the findings were a damning report card on global commitment to ending poverty.

Another international report says European aid to less developed countries is not only shrinking, but

much of what remains is squandered in bureaucracy or linked to trade.

Reality of Aid 1996 — a report by non-governmental organisations from 27 countries — says aid is likely to fall to its lowest level ever this year.

The report also says that competition for funds means the countries that need aid most are getting less.

"Least developed and other low income countries have seen their share of aid fall by seven per cent since 1990," the report says. "Bilateral aid to sub-Saharan Africa... since 1991 has been reduced by \$670 million."

Mirjam van Reisen, one of the report's authors, told Reuters the situation could improve dramatically if the European Union (EU) and member states put more emphasis on coordination.

She said the European Commission — which has the job of coordinating aid policy by EU member states — faced countless problems including an "incoherent organisational structure" which meant much of the work was duplicated.

The regionally orientated divisions of the commission compound the problem — there are four separate departments dealing with development policy as well as the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO).

Ms. Van Reisen said

while member states were putting more pressure on the commission over aid, they were not making resources available.

She said there was a "drastic shortage of staff and lack of expertise within the commission" leading to a greater emphasis being put on more costly subcontractors.

The report said the gap between donor rhetoric and action was a key feature of international aid.

It said donors wanted free trade, but linking aid to trade had cost recipient countries an estimated \$2 billion in overpricing. Human rights considerations were also buried by commercial interests, it said.

Reality of aid called on governments to set deadlines for eradicating poverty, ensure aid as a percentage of donor nation gross domestic product was maintained and allocate at least 50 per cent of aid for direct investment in social development.

Preparatory work began last year, while Israel and

Palestinians prepare stock exchange

NABLUS, West Bank (R) — Palestinians, eager to get the wheels of their economy going, are planning their first stock exchange to attract capital from expatriates reluctant to invest in the volatile West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Work on the \$2 million Palestine Securities Exchange (PSE) in the West Bank city of Nablus is in the final stages and the fully electronic bourse could be open for trading before the end of the year, officials said.

The PSE is a joint venture by the Palestinian Development and Investment Company (PADICO) and the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) Samed Establishment, both important players in the nascent economy in self-rule areas.

"The stock market was designed to repatriate expatriate Palestinian capital by ensuring maximum protection for investors," PSE General Manager Safwan Bataina told Reuters.

He said that the modern technology, transparency and strict monitoring regulations would enable investors to monitor their investments from anywhere in the world.

Preparatory work began last year, while Israel and

the PLO moved forward in implementing their 1993 self-rule accord.

But Palestinian economists fear that the election of hardliner Benjamin Netanyahu as Israel's prime minister could discourage investors.

Mr. Netanyahu opposes trading occupied Arab land for peace and has said his top priority would be security for Israel, which under its deals with the PLO controls the self-rule areas' crossing points and the flow of imports and exports. But Dr. Bataina said investors in the bourse project were not swayed by the government change in Israel.

"Of course we cannot ignore the outcome of the Israeli elections. But the financiers are committed to the project and will not be stopped by Netanyahu or by others," Dr. Bataina said.

Canadian experts and technicians contracted by the PSE have begun furnishing the 1,200 square metre future bourse.

State-of-the-art communications equipment and computer networks are being installed at the spa-

cious offices overlooking Nablus, the designated economic capital of the self-rule areas.

Dr. Bataina said the PSE would be ready to open by the end of August. But a decision on the official opening would be made by the Palestinian finance ministry which will act as the regulatory authority supervising the PSE.

Administrators estimate that Palestinians living in the Arab World, North and South America and in Europe own more than \$5 billion in assets. Most expatriate investment has gone into real estate in the Palestinian areas, reflecting concern over political instability.

Feasibility studies show that about 60 companies which had sold shares upon founding operate in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with a total market value of over \$700 million.

Dr. Bataina, who worked for 10 years on Wall Street and served as an economic advisor to five prime ministers in Jordan, said he expected most companies

(Continued on page 9)

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, JULY 13, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) During the day today, you have secret anxieties which could keep you from handling your career activities well. Resist dwelling on them and later tonight you will be able to conclude on some important project you have put aside.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 21) A close friend and a new fellow associate might not be agreeable today and spoil plans you had made, however, stall for time until this evening when you will be able to meet with some knowledgeable person and get all the answers.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Try not to get into any altercation today between a fellow associate and a bigwig. Go quietly about your career activities and you will accomplish a great deal later this evening towards your success.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) A fellow associate could disagree with someone you do not know today, however, don't take any sides or you could find yourself defending any adverse decisions. Later this evening you will find romance with your mate favourable.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You want to have a good time today, however, you just recalled a promise you made which must be fulfilled. Fulfill that obligation first and then later tonight you can have fun with your loved ones and close friends.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Do not disagree today with anyone at home or in the business world otherwise you could find yourself in hot water with a fellow associate or your loved ones. This evening brings fine accord with a fellow associate.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Forget that impulse to do something radical today in the outside world which could affect your regular career activities. Later this evening you can go out on the town with some close friends and have a good time.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Making any changes where your present career activities are concerned today will not adapt to your benefit. Later this evening will be good for staying in with your mate and loved ones and have some interesting conversations.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) It is best to wait until this evening for amusements, since the morning today is best spent perfecting your talents, whatever they be in business or in some other activities which will get recognised by someone in authority.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to Jan. 20) It is important you keep poised and smile more at home today so that you do not invite difficulties there. Avoid disagreements involving some fellow associate and a bigwig or you could find yourself in the middle of a bad situation.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This is not a good day for travel today, so get busy at reports and statements which are important to handle and you will gain success from those in authority. Later this evening, plan to spend some time with your loved ones.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Business and finances take up a good part of your time today, so make the best of them, however, later tonight you will get a feeling of satisfaction for tasks well-completed which will get recognition from some bigwig.

Birthstone of July: Ruby — Tiger's Eye

Ireland tops EU growth table for second year

LUXEMBOURG (AFP) — Ireland's status as the economic tiger of western Europe was confirmed recently with the publication of figures putting it at the top of the European Union's growth table for a second consecutive year.

An 8.6 per cent increase in gross domestic product (GDP) was nearly twice as

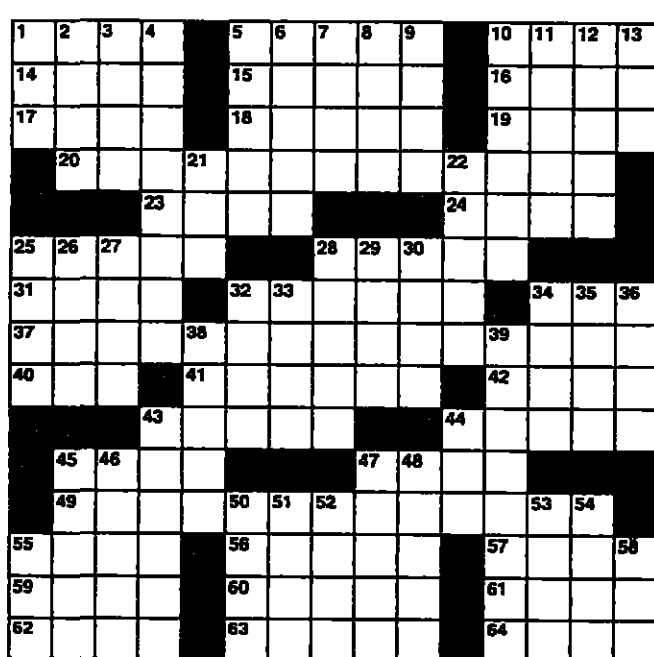
fast as its closest rival, Finland, which saw growth of 4.2 per cent in its first full year in the European Union (EU). Overall, the European Union's economy grew at a rate of 2.4 per cent in 1995, down from 2.8 per cent in 1994, according to the figures released by Eurostat.

That compares with 2.1 per cent in the United States and 0.9 per cent in Japan. Austria registered the lowest growth at 1.8 per cent, followed by Belgium, Germany and Portugal (1.9 per cent).

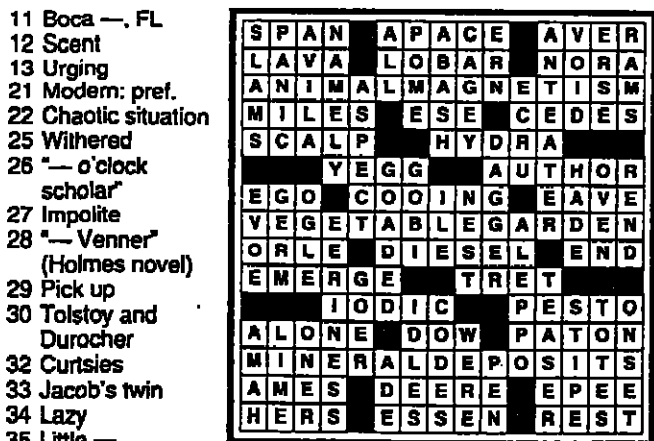
The four big EU economies — France, Germany, Italy and the U.K. — accounted for 72 per cent of the EU's total GDP.

THE Daily Crossword by Florence C. Adler

- ACROSS
- Karenina
 - Feels compassion
 - Salver
 - Borscht
 - Ingredient
 - Because of
 - Rabbit
 - Inland sea
 - Tapestry
 - Collar
 - State flower of Florida
 - Require
 - 1492 vessel
 - Andrea del
 - Raines and Logan
 - Case for a small article
 - Creed
 - State: abbr.
 - Clara Barton
 - Wind direction: abbr.
 - Anticipates
 - Jar
 - Follow
 - Small fish
 - Monster of fairy tales
 - Italian city
 - Very jealous
 - Author Waugh
 - Mistake
 - Tiny particle
 - Convene
 - Sawyer of TV
 - Roman robe
 - and eggs
 - High-spirited horse
 - Enthusiasm



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- DOWN
- Desert garment
 - Pianist Peter
 - Approach
 - City (resort)
 - Healed
 - Seasoning plant
 - And others: abbr.
 - Fair to muddling
 - Dissertation
 - Boca —, FL
 - Scent
 - Urging
 - Modern: pref.
 - Chaotic situation
 - Withered
 - o'clock
 - Impolite
 - Venner
 - (Holmes novel)
 - Pick up
 - Tolstoy and Durocher
 - Curtis
 - Jacob's twin
 - Lazy
 - Little —
 - (Dickens' girl)
 - Mild expletive
 - Rajah's wife
 - Select a candidate
 - Constructs
 - Holy woman: abbr.
 - Eyed
 - Avarice
 - Expiate
 - Fragment
 - Beatty and Florem
 - Legal document
 - Dies —
 - Type of flight: abbr.
 - Mental discipline
 - , amas, amat
 - Isle of —

UNFURNISHED APARTMENT FOR RENT

Newly built building, 3 bedrooms - one master - 3 bathrooms - balcony - kitchen - central heating. Close to main services.
Tel: 834027, from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.

FOR RENT

Luxury fully furnished apartment for rent, Area 330 Sq.m., 2nd floor, Jabal Amman, 4th Circle, opposite Greek and Korean ambassadors' residence. 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, salon, dining room, family room, kitchen, telephone, independent central heating, garage, elevator. Yearly rent. Call Tel: 666018 from 10:00 to 13:00 hrs

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"The motivation seminar got everyone really excited. I think it was all that free coffee they gave us."

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



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15/07/96	19:00	AMMAN	10.00
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AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
HOUSING BANK CENTER - AMMAN - JORDAN
TELEPHONE: 687171 / 687172
ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (06/07/1996 - 10/07/1996)
WEEKLY REPORT

DURING THE LAST 2 WEEKS		COMPANY NAME	S/E	DIV	No. OF CONTRACTS	No. OF SHARES EXCHANGED	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE PRICE	MARKET SHARE %
PRICE	LOW													
221.500	216.000	ABAB BANK	11.7	1.44	41	1460	319055	217.00	217.00	213.00	214.00	-3.00	774.366	-0.23
3.360	3.200	ABAB BANK OF JORDAN	11.0	0.00	5	2024	3230	3.20	3.15	3.05	3.05	-0.15	3.078	-0.19
1.080	1.040	ABAB BANK OF JORDAN	29.1	0.00	3	1500	1500	1.04	1.01	0.98	0.98	-0.06	0.903	-0.15
2.220	2.120	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	6.9	6.51	14	7472	15808	2.12	2.14	2.12	2.14	+0.02	2.139	+0.02
4.400	4.270	THE HOUSING BK.	11.4	4.24	15	11164	47520	4.20	4.25	4.20	4.25	+0.05	4.257	+0.05
2.730	2.700	JORDAN BANK	19.4	0.00	24	9417	25517	2.71	2.72	2.68	2.71	-0.01	2.709	-0.01
1.970	1.900	JORD. BANK	5.9	7.61	74	230604	213055	1.93	1.93	1.90	1.92	-0.01	1.924	-0.01
3.700	3.700	JORD. BANK	19.3	0.00	2	600	3700	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.60	-0.10	3.600	-0.10
3.840	3.700	JORD. ISLAMIC BANK	11.0	0.00	2	600	3700	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.60	-0.10	3.600	-0.10
1.520	1.700	JORD. BANK	124.8	0.00	1	100	1520	1.70	1.74	1.74	1.74	+0.04	1.740	+0.04
3.540	3.450	JORD. BANK	18.1	0.00	9	11804	35553	3.45	3.40	3.35	3.35	-0.10	3.351	-0.10
2.800	2.420	ABAB BANK (BETTER)	1.5	6.41	9	2600	4146	2.42	2.40	2.34	2.34	-0.08	2.344	-0.08
4.400	4.300	ABAB BANK	23.3	0.00	112	417398	106380	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.30	0.00	4.300	0.00
1.110	1.000	ABAB BANK	0.00	0.00	4	200	1100	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.000	0.00
		ABAB BANK	0.00	0.00	55	67543	70707	1.05	1.08	1.02	1.08	+0.03	1.047	+0.03
BANKS														
4.300	4.300	JORDANIAN BANK	11.7	6.45	3	517	2223	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.30	0.00	4.300	0.00
2.360	2.150	JORD. BANK	6.1	0.30	8	5590	12570	2.15	2.21	2.15	2.15	-0.04	2.163	-0.04
INSURANCE														
1.550	1.450	JORD. BANK	10.2	0.16	11	5867	12793	1.45	1.50	1.46	1.47	-0.02	1.477	-0.02
5.000	4.650	ABAB BANK	17.0	3.00	7	1244	6246	4.65	5.00	4.90	4.90	-0.05	4.924	-0.05
1.300	1.170	ABAB BANK	0.00	0.00	23	8650	9804	1.17	1.16	1.08	1.12	-0.05	1.133	-0.05
1.800	1.700	JORD. BANK	20.7	3.42	5	7250	6836	1.70	1.73	1.63	1.63	-0.07	1.630	-0.07
1.840	1.800	JORD. BANK	16.4	0.00	1	500	1800	1.80	1.78	1.78	1.78	-0.02	1.780	-0.02
9.300	9.300	JORD. BANK	11.0	0.00	2	1000	9300	9.30	9.29	9.29	9.29	-0.01	9.290	-0.01
2.050	1.970	JORD. BANK	80.6	0.00	2	100	2050	1.97	1.97	1.97	1.97	0.00	1.970	0.00
3.250	3.230	JORD. BANK	12.7	6.23	20	31765	102250	3.23	3.25	3.17	3.21	-0.02	3.219	-0.02
1.040	1.040	JORD. BANK	0.00	0.00	19	17100	16582	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	0.00	1.040	0.00
2.310	1.850	JORD. BANK	9.4	0.62	79	30850	54361	1.85	1.97	1.70	1.70	-0.12	1.761	-0.12
1.990	1.990	JORD. BANK	0.00	0.00	15	11350	10171	1.99	1.99	1.99	1.99	0.00	1.990	0.00
SERVICES														
21.500	21.500	JORD. BANK	19.5	3.11	5	144	3109	21.50	21.50	21.50	21.50	0.00	21.500	0.00
1.250	1.250	JORD. BANK	0.00	0.00	6	4100	5725	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	0.00	1.250	0.00
3.380	3.380	JORD. BANK	17.7	3.24	89	41441	126669	3.38	3.38	3.38	3.38	0.00	3.380	0.00
2.940	2.940	JORD. BANK	10.7	0.00	19	2459	6934	2.94	2.95	2.95	2.95	0.01	2.950	0.01
5.560	5.560	JORD. BANK	15.4	9.07	74	4168	38489	5.56	5.56	5.56	5.56	0.00	5.560	0.00
7.710	7.710	JORD. BANK	8.9	4.97	2	1033	7789	7.71	7.71	7.71	7.71	0.00	7.710	0.00
7.250	7.250	JORD. BANK	30.7	0.00	3	199	456	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.25	0.00	7.250	0.00
2.490	2.490	JORD. BANK	8.3	3.87	10	6083	39263	2.49	2.49	2.49	2.49	0.00	2.490	0.00
7.050	7.050	JORD. BANK	17.8	6.29	102	20567	67953	7.05	7.05	7.05	7.05	0.00	7.050	0.00
3.350	3.350	JORD. BANK	7.1	7.1	3	141	341	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	0.00	3.350	0.00
5.900	5.900	JORD. BANK	12.9	7.02	9	3600	6132	5.90	5.90	5.90	5.90	0.00	5.900	0.00
2.700	2.700	JORD. BANK	16.2	3.17	1	200	630	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70	0.00	2.700	0.00
2.000	2.000	JORD. BANK	6.7	11.34	2	900	1300	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	2.000	0.00
3.300	3.300	JORD. BANK	12.0	4.55	21	2400	3655	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	0.00	3.300	0.00
7.680	7.680	JORD. BANK	12.0	5.10	24	5445	3643	7.68	7.68	7.68	7.68	0.00	7.680	0.00
1.680	1.680	JORD. BANK	0.00	0.00	123	19560	10032	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	0.00	1.680	0.00
4.900	4.900	JORD. BANK	5.9	5.73	2	1675	20197	4.90	4.90	4.90	4.90	0.00	4.900	0.00
2.960	2.960	JORD. BANK	7.4	9.50	39	9100	10035	2.96	2.96	2.96	2.96	0.00	2.960	0.00
1.220	1.220	JORD. BANK	0.00	0.00	3	350	467	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	0.00	1.220	0.00
1.440	1.440	JORD. BANK	9.9	8.46	47	21900	14930	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	0.00	1.440	0.00
1.050	1.050	JORD. BANK	191.3	0.00	127	38450	41464	1.05	1.05	1.05	1.05	0.00	1.050	0.00
2.950	2.950	JORD. BANK	74.0	0.00	1	7500	21000	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	0.00	2.950	0.00
1.390	1.390	JORD. BANK	0.00	0.00	76	3300	1008	1.39	1.39	1.39	1.39	0.00	1.390	0.00
1.630	1.630	JORD. BANK	24.2	0.00	59	24100	31179	1.63	1.63	1.63	1.63	0.00	1.630	0.00
7.350	7.350	JORD. BANK	44.9	4.80	1	50	63	7.35	7.35	7.35	7.35	0.00	7.350	0.00
1.490	1.490	JORD. BANK	5.5	11.05	239	113300	212269	1.49	1.49	1.49	1.49	0.00	1.490	0.00
1.500	1.500	JORD. BANK	15.4	0.00	187	69810	84591	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	0.00	1.500	0.00
1.260	1.260	JORD. BANK	26.5	0.00	103	15150	35141	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	0.00	1.260	0.00
1.990	1.990	JORD. BANK	115.1	0.00	25	12550	20735	1.99	1.99	1.99	1.99	0.00	1.990	0.00
1.250	1.250	JORD. BANK	34.6	0.00	38	18800	21021	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	0.00	1.250	0.00
1.320	1.320	JORD. BANK	27.9	0.00	1	750	783	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	0.00	1.320	0.00
INDUSTRIAL														
21.7	21.7	JORD. BANK	14.0	0.00	1	500	2170	21.70	21.70	21.70	21.70	0.00	21.700	0.00
21.7	21.7	JORD. BANK	14.0	0.00	1	500	2170	21.70	21.70	21.70	21.70	0.00	21.700	0.00
GRAND TOTAL														
21.7	21.7	JORD. BANK	14.0	0.00	1	500	2170	21.70	21.70	21.70	21.70	0.00	21.700	0.00

Palestinians prepare stock exchange

(Continued from page 8)

that are capitalised at \$500,000 or more to be listed on the stock exchange.

He said he expects an annual trading volume of up to \$60 million in the first two years, which would climb to its normal level by the end of the decade.

Dr. Bataina said the Palestinian National Authority and local governments would be able to issue bonds which will be traded on the PSE.

The stock market would allow a multi-currency trading system enabling companies capitalised in different currencies to be listed. Investors would be able to transfer profits abroad, he said.

Dr. Bataina said that at least 10 investment groups had already contacted the PSE to inquire about the rules and regulations of setting up brokerage companies. He said he expected up to 15 brokerage companies to be accredited with the stock exchange within two-three years after the exchange opened.

Dr. Bataina plans to recruit Palestinian traders and administrators working at stock exchanges around the world to help run the PSE. He says the exchange would create 500 jobs in the emerging securities sector.

Feasibility studies prepared by PADICO were made together with the World Bank and the Palestinian Ministry of Finance. A blueprint of a securities law prepared in consultation with international legal experts will be presented to the Palestinian Legislative Council for approval before the stock market begins operations. This law will govern the monitoring of the stock exchange.

"The market will be open to all and information will be available to everybody. We will monitor the exchange, and so will the Palestinian Authority, dealers and investors," he said.

Eurotunnel traffic soars in six months

PARIS (AFP) — Eurotunnel, the Anglo-French group nearing a crucial deadline for a multi-billion dollar rescue package, has offered shareholders and creditors some positive news on its operations.

The company said that in the first half of the year, the number of cars using Eurotunnel's shuttle service to cross the English Channel jumped 89 per cent from the same period in 1995 to 854,174. In June, shuttle traffic, including cars and buses, reached 183,752 vehicles, the highest level since the opening of the tunnel, it said.

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The Business of Information The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates

Prices as at 12/07/96 09:02

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	SGD	HKD
US Dollar	1.5218	0.6442	0.6278	118.43	1.3693	1532.20	17000	5.1505	
DEM	0.6442	1.0000	0.7851	72.265	1.4536	1936.27	2006.62	163.86	
GBP	0.6278	0.7851	1.0000	69.210	1.7847	2466.37	2666.37	163.86	
CHF	0.0156	0.0136	0.0136	1.0000	137.76	166.64	166.64	7.4607	
JPY	0.0074	0.0063	0.0063	0.0073	1.0000	124.96	124.96	37.463	
CH Yen	0.0090	0.0074	0.0074	0.0088	1.1365	1.2368	13.85	154.700	4.6531
CA Dollar	0.7832	0.3110	0.3070	0.3125	0.7220	1.0000	1119.06	124.64	3.7603
IT Lire	0.0007	0.0009	0.0009	0.0012	0.0013	0.0013	11.13	3.3571	
NL Guilder	0.5355	0.2154	0.2129	0.2165	0.2770	0.3015	387.31	3.0153	
FR Franc	0.1942	0.2951	0.1259	24.4105	21.45	0.2656	33.13	33.1300	

Energy

Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	20.45	20.60
WTI	21.85	21.95
Bony	20.45	20.60
Dubai	19.17	19.94
UL Gas	205.00	205.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4058	0.17178	0.33556	25.5142
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.4158	0.17574	0.34224	26.1268
BH Dinar	3.3361	5.07614	2.14915	4.19815	369.276
KW Dinar	0.2770	0.4214	0.17082	0.33778	293.6
CY Pound	2.1265	3.3364	1.3702	2.6768	235.377

Metal Prices

Metal	Bid	Offer
Cold (oz's)	383.6	384.1
Silver (oz's)	5.4	5.6
Platinum (oz's)	390.23	391.65
AL (3 Months)	147.4	147.6
CU (3 Months)	1860	1865
Zinc (3 Months)	1018	1020
Lead (3 Months)	784	785
NI (3 Months)	7365	7375

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)

Period	-1-	-3-	-6-	-9-	-1-
Cncy	Month	Months	Months	Months	Year
USD	5.31	5.55	5.75	5.97	6.02
DEM	5.66	5.87	6.01	6.21	6.30
JPY	0.40	0.46	0.55	0.77	1.00
DEM	3.25	3.25	3.32	3.38	3.56
FRF	3.65	3.73	3.82	3.94	4.08
CHF	2.48	2.62	2.65	2.82	2.75
ITL	8.79	8.77	8.50	8.37	8.34

Main Equity Indices

Bourse	Index	Value	Low	High	Pt Chg	% Chng	Chng
New York	DOW JONES	5480.27	5479.54	5543.07	5520.54	-4.73	-0.27
New York	S&P 500	641.13	641.09	647.64	645.67	-0.7	-0.54
London	FT-SE 100	3728.3	3719.5	3745.8	3749	-4.55	-0.20
Tokyo	Nikkei 225	11856.45	11856.5	11807.3	11892.6	-4.08	-0.13
Paris	CAC 40	2050.55	2047.83	2068.31	2073.66	-1.11	-0.11
Frankfurt	DAX	2554.26	2544.16	2561.65	2575.54	-4.21	-0.18

Energy

Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	127.08	Spot
Cocoa (5/ton)	1433	Spot
Sugar (5/ton)	370	Spot
Wheat (5/ton)	226	Spot
Soy (c/lbs)	2495	Spot
Tea (10/lb)	100	Spot
Barley (5/bsh)	3.59	Spot
Rice (5/ton)	430	Spot

* JOD Cross Rates

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.709	0.710
GB Sterling	1.0975	1.100
DE Mark	0.4634	0.4657
CH Franc	0.5696	0.5654
FR Franc	0.1369	0.1376
JP Yen	0.6397	0.6429
NL Guilder	0.4129	0.415
TT Lira	0.0461	0.0463

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

COUNTDOWN TO ATLANTA

Germany aiming to remain third on medal list

FRANKFURT (AP) — Four years ago in Barcelona, in its first Olympics as a reunified nation, Germany placed third in the medal table. The goal for Atlanta is to do as well.

Germany's unified team collected 82 medals, 33 of them gold. The unified team of athletes from 12 former Soviet republics topped the standings with 112, while the United States finished with 108.

Since there will be no unified team in Atlanta, Germany could do even better than in 1992, if it can fend off Russia and surging China, which was fourth in 1992.

"I hope that we can be equally successful in Atlanta as in Barcelona," said National Olympic Committee president Walther Troeger.

"We have good chances in equestrian, fencing, rowing, canoeing, field hockey, swimming and track and field events," Troeger said.

Those are traditional German strengths.

But perhaps the strongest German contender among 479 athletes traveling to Atlanta will be tennis star Steffi Graf, who will compete in her third Olympics. Her male compatriots, Boris Becker and Michael Stich, who won the doubles gold in Barcelona, are not competing.

"Olympics are always something special, and you can win a medal only every four years," said Graf, who won gold in 1988 in Seoul and silver in Barcelona.

Graf comes to Atlanta in a year in which she's already won her seventh Wimbledon singles title and her fifth French Open championship. Her gold medal rival could be Monica Seles.

Anke Huber, the second German singles player, could also hope for a medal.

German reunification in 1990 raised hopes that by tapping the well of east German talent, the nation could even get ahead of the United States and Soviet Union/Russia/Unified team in the medal haul.

That has not entirely happened, and Germany's reputation was further tainted by revelations of widespread doping in east Germany. However, the German team remains a formidable force packed with medal hopefuls.

In Athletics, Germans are favorites in several field events.

Lars Riedel is a top contender in the men's discus, as well as like Wyludda in the women's discus and Astrid Kumbernuss in the women's



Germany's Steffi Graf

shot put.

Heike Drechsler has been battling injuries this year, after failing to medal in either the long jump or the heptathlon at last year's world championship.

But if she regains her fitness and concentrates on only one event, she could still retain her long jump Olympic title.

Dieter Baumann can hardly hope for another miracle in the 5,000.

This time, the Kenyans are unlikely to allow themselves to be surprised by the German as they were in 1992 when he clinched the gold.

Heike Henkel won't be there to defend her high jump gold medal after giving birth to a child and battling injuries. But her successor, Romanian-born Alina Astafei, is a top medal prospect.

Florian Schwarthoff has already beaten Colin Jackson, set a German record of 13.14 seconds and could be among the medalists in the men's 110-metre hurdles.

Uta Pippig, a three-time Boston Marathon winner, will be among the stars of the women's marathon.

In swimming, German women, some of them survivors of the east German system, are expected to do better than men.

Franziska Van Almsick, who won two silver and two bronze medals in Barcelona and became one of Germany's top sports stars, will compete in 100 and 200 freestyle, although she was beaten in the German trials in the 100.

Dagmar Hase will defend her 400-freestyle title, while Sandra Voelker will challenge for gold in the 50.

Boxing, fencing, cycling, rowing and equestrian events could also produce medals for Germany. Nicole Uphoff-Becker, a four-time dressage gold medalist, was not selected for the German team but a special ruling by the International

Riding Federation will allow her to compete as an individual.

In team sports, Germany's women should be among the U.S. team's main rivals for the title in women's soccer, while the men's hockey team could be a dark horse. The men's soccer team failed to qualify.

Bulls player injured in Olympic exhibition

HAMILTON, Ontario (AP) — Chicago Bulls forward Toni Kukoc, a key to Croatia's basketball medal hopes in the Atlanta Olympics, broke his left thumb in an exhibition game against Canada.

Kukoc, injured midway through the first half of Croatia's 82-72 victory, is expected to play in the Olympics, Croat head coach Petar Skansi said.

"Maybe we can put something on it," said Skansi, adding the break was between the knuckle and the tip of the thumb.

Kukoc also was optimistic about playing in Atlanta.

"It's OK, I'm fine," said Kukoc, the NBA's sixth man award winner last season after averaging 13.1 points, 3.5 assists and 4.0 rebounds.

He scored six points in nine minutes of the game which included a small shoving match that nearly turned into a bench-clearing brawl with about six minutes remaining.

Toronto Raptors forward Zoran Tabak was 9-for-9 from the field and led Croatia with 23 points. Martin Keane led Canada, which did not qualify for the Olympics, with 15 points.

The Croatians are scheduled to play Canada again on Thursday night in Barrie, Ontario, before leaving for Cincinnati and a week-long training camp before the Atlanta Games.

Johnson wants rival Jackson in top form in Atlanta

LONDON (R) — World high hurdles champion Allen Johnson wants Colin Jackson to find his old form at the Olympics, even though he knows it could cost him the gold medal.

The 25-year-old American succeeded the injured Jackson as world champion last year and has won their three meetings so far this summer.

Johnson, who runs his last race before the Atlanta Games at the London Grand Prix meeting on Friday, said: "I miss not running against the old Jackson."

"I don't know what is wrong with him. Maybe it was the injury — or speculation about this and that."

"I just want him to get his form back. I enjoy the competition. With Colin going well, we could go under the world record."

World record holder Jackson is already in the United States. Another Briton, Tony Jarrett, should provide Johnson with some stern opposition at Friday's Crystal Palace meeting.

"It's disappointing Colin won't be around," Johnson said. "But Tony will be as tough as usual to beat."

"He runs from wire to wire. No matter what you do he is always there, biting at your heels."

First Palestinian Olympic team heads for Atlanta

GAZA CITY (AP) — Flashing "V" for victory signs, the first Palestinian Olympic team set off Thursday for Atlanta, bubbling with excitement despite their faint hopes of bringing home a medal.

"This is a victory for all Palestinians, because it is the first time Palestinians can take part in the Olympics," Runner Majed Abu Marahil said as he kissed his brothers and father good-bye at the Olympic committee office in Gaza city.

Abu Marahil, a guard at PLO leader Yasser Arafat's Gaza headquarters, will compete in the 10,000 metres at the Atlanta Games, which open July 19.

"I will be very happy when I hold the Palestinian flag along with the

other athletes," Abu Marahil said Thursday. "I hope that next time more Palestinians will participate in the Olympics."

Filling out the fledgling team are Ehab Salameh, a 21-year-old Palestinian policeman who will compete in the 5,000 metres and Rashed Judah, also 21, a boxer from Jerusalem who lives in England.

Judah is already training in the United States.

Abu Marahil, Salameh and eight Olympic officials drove in a Palestinian police car to the Rafah border crossing with Egypt.

They are to spend two nights in Cairo before leaving early Sunday for Atlanta.

"Our victory is to raise the

Palestinian flag along with the flags of all the world," said Sadi Haqoura, spokesman for the Palestinian Olympic Committee.

"This is a political and athletic victory."

Abu Marahil, who has had to continue working as a guard because the Palestinian Authority cannot afford stipends for its athletes, has a best time in the 10,000 of about 30 minutes, almost 3 1/2 minutes slower than the world record.

But he said earlier that his goal is not to win, but to help change the negative association the world has had of Palestinians since the massacre of 11 Israeli athletes by Palestinian terrorists at the 1972 Munich Olympics.

Huge security operation protects games

ATLANTA (R) — The Atlanta Olympics has received threats but none serious and security chiefs said on Thursday they were confident terrorists would not strike.

Tens of thousands of security personnel, including 2,000 police officers from around the world, will be patrolling the games, ever mindful of the 1972 Munich massacre of 11 Israelis by Palestinian extremists.

"We have no indication of any terrorist threat against the games at this point," said FBI spokesman Woody Johnson.

Intelligence is a high pri-

ority but he refused to be drawn on whether international or home-based extremists were a bigger threat.

The attack on U.S. Forces in Saudi Arabia as well as the Oklahoma City and New York World Trade Centre bombs have put security chiefs on full alert on both fronts.

"We are actively pursuing any information within the rules of law that might indicate a threat to the games," Johnson added.

About 10,000 athletes from 197 countries will be easily outnumbered by those guarding them in an

operation organisers said was costing "hundreds of millions of dollars."

"We have had some threats but at this point we have had no credible threats," said Gary McConnell of state Olympic Law Enforcement Command (SOLEC).

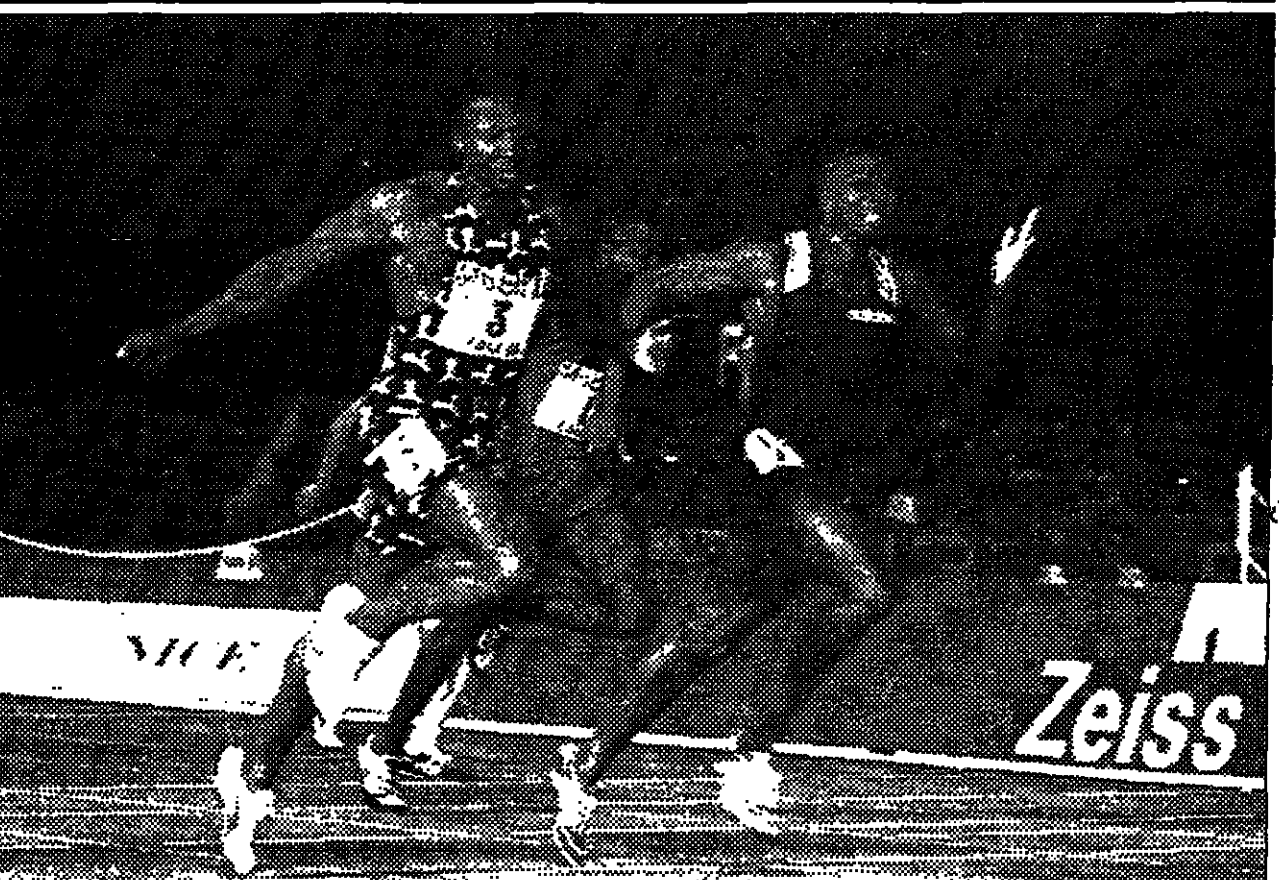
Nothing is being left to chance. When two men were found allegedly making pipe bombs in rural Georgia 90 miles (150 km) from Atlanta, an Olympic connection was assumed and investigated until it could be ruled out.

An Olympics security officer was shot in the chest

by a stray bullet and two guards narrowly escaped injury when a stolen car ploughed through a security checkpoint last week.

But organisers keep insisting that Atlanta, which has one of the highest crime rates in the United States, will be the safest place on earth for the century games from July 19 to August 4.

Security personnel will be highly visible and intentionally so but Olympics security chief Bill Rathbun pledged it would not be "stifling, overwhelming or offensive."



Olympic sprint champion Linford Christie (left) and Canada's world champion Donovan Bailey arrive in a tight photo finish in the 100 metres event at the Nice Grand Prix, July 10. Bailey was given the victory after the photo finish with both men recording a time of 10.17 seconds (Reuters photo)

Tour de France

Chepe Gonzalez wins 11th stage

VALENCE (R) — Chepe Gonzalez's unexpected win in Thursday's 11th stage of the Tour de France came as welcome relief for Colombian cycling which has fallen on hard times recently.

"It's the most important win of my career and an enormous surprise," the twice winner of the tour of Colombia said after scoring his first significant victory outside his country.

The 27-year-old, whose full name is Jose Jaime Gonzalez Pico, escaped from a group of eight riders in the last kilometre to take

the day's 202-km stage to Valence.

"In the last climb, I wasn't feeling too good and I was afraid I might fall back," he said. "Then I started to believe I could win because I knew the other guys would not watch out for the little Colombian."

Cyclists from Colombia shot to prominence in the 1980s and shone in the world's greatest cycle race thanks to their ability in the high climbs.

Lucho Herrera, fifth in the tour in 1985, and Fabio Parra, who finished third three years later, became

idols at home and dozens of Colombian journalists travelled to France every summer to follow the race.

Then there was Alvaro Mejia, who was fourth in 1994 but has disappeared since.

"Nobody knows where he is," Motorola team director Hennie Kuiper said. "It's a pity. He was a great rider and the only Colombian I knew who fared well against the clock. He was a potential tour winner."

While European cycling has evolved dramatically over the past few years the Colombians, with gifted

riders but limited means, were unable to follow.

As the sport declined, sponsors retired and two Colombian teams — Cafe de Colombia and Varta — collapsed.

The Glacial team, whose leader Nelson Rodriguez won a tour stage in 1994, still exists but was not selected for this year's race.

Only five Colombians, all with Spanish side kelme, entered the race this year compared to 26 in 1986.

"It's hard to find sponsors and the press has been very severe with us," said Gonzalez.

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Deter homer

SMORE (R) — Derek Jeter's home run in the 11th inning of the Yankees' 4-3 win over the New York Mets on Thursday night was the 10th of a crucial four-inning rally.

Martinez hit a second-run homer for the Yankees to give them a 3-2 lead over the Mets in the 11th inning.

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PHILADELPHIA Mel Gibson & Sophie Marceau in Braveheart winner of 6 Academy Awards Shows: 12:00, 3:00, 6:00, 9:00	PLAZA Layla Elwi...in Ya Dunya Ya Gharami (Arabic) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 Toy Story 5:00 p.m.	CONCORD CONCORD "1" Mel Gibson & Sophie Marceau in Braveheart winner of 6 Academy Awards Shows: 1:00, 5:00, 8:30 - CONCORD "2" Braveheart Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 9:30 (film duration-3 hours)	Arabian Theatre & Cinema TEL: 618274 - 618275 Today presents Zawad Weld Awad theatre group in the play entitled Five-Star Government Starring comedians: Mahmoud Saimah & Hussein Tubeishat play starts 8:30 p.m.	Nabil & Hisham's Theatre TEL: 618274 - 618275 PRESENTS THE SATIRICAL COMEDY Arab Human Rights at 8:30 p.m. For reservation please call 625155 - 640155
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Gulf war Arab allies meet today to discuss Iran, Mideast peace

DUBAI (R) — Foreign ministers of Egypt, Syria and the six oil-rich Gulf Arab countries will meet in Oman on Saturday for talks on strained ties with Iran and support for Damascus' stand on the Middle East peace process.

The two-day meeting in Muscat will also discuss Gulf security after a bomb killed 19 American soldiers in Saudi Arabia in June, officials and diplomats in the Gulf said.

"Saudi Arabia will brief the ministers on the bombing and they will discuss security in the Gulf," an Arab diplomat said.

In addition to Saudi Arabia, the Gulf Arab states are Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

Along with Egypt and Syria, they formed the Arab backbone of the U.S.-led alliance that forced Iraq out of Kuwait in 1991. In the same year they formed their "Damascus Declaration" alliance.

Diplomats said meetings of the eight countries deal more with Middle East peace, Iraq and Iran than with the objectives of the pact, which envisaged economic and political cooperation and an ambitious Gulf deterrent force.

"They are expected to

adopt the Arab summit decisions on the peace process and review (Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu's comments in Washington," one official said.

Mr. Netanyahu reiterated in Washington this week his opposition to the land-for-peace idea, insisted on Jerusalem as a unified capital for Israel and refused the setting up of a Palestinian state.

Arab leaders were pushed by Mr. Netanyahu's election to hold a summit in Cairo in June, where they said they would reconsider concessions they made in five years of peace talks if the new Israeli government tries to change the terms of negotiations.

"The ministers will support Syria's demand for an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights," another official said.

They are also due to discuss Syria's efforts to mend ties between Iran and its Gulf Arab neighbours as well as Egypt.

Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa recently visited Iran, Bahrain, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. He said Syria wanted to improve ties between Iran and Arab states, particularly Egypt.

Syria, Iran's main Arab

ally, mediated between Tehran and Bahrain, which accuses the Islamic republic of being behind an alleged plot to topple its government. Iran denied the charge.

Gulf Arab states have accused their neighbour of interfering in their internal affairs and voiced concern over its arms programme, in an unusually strong attack on Iran.

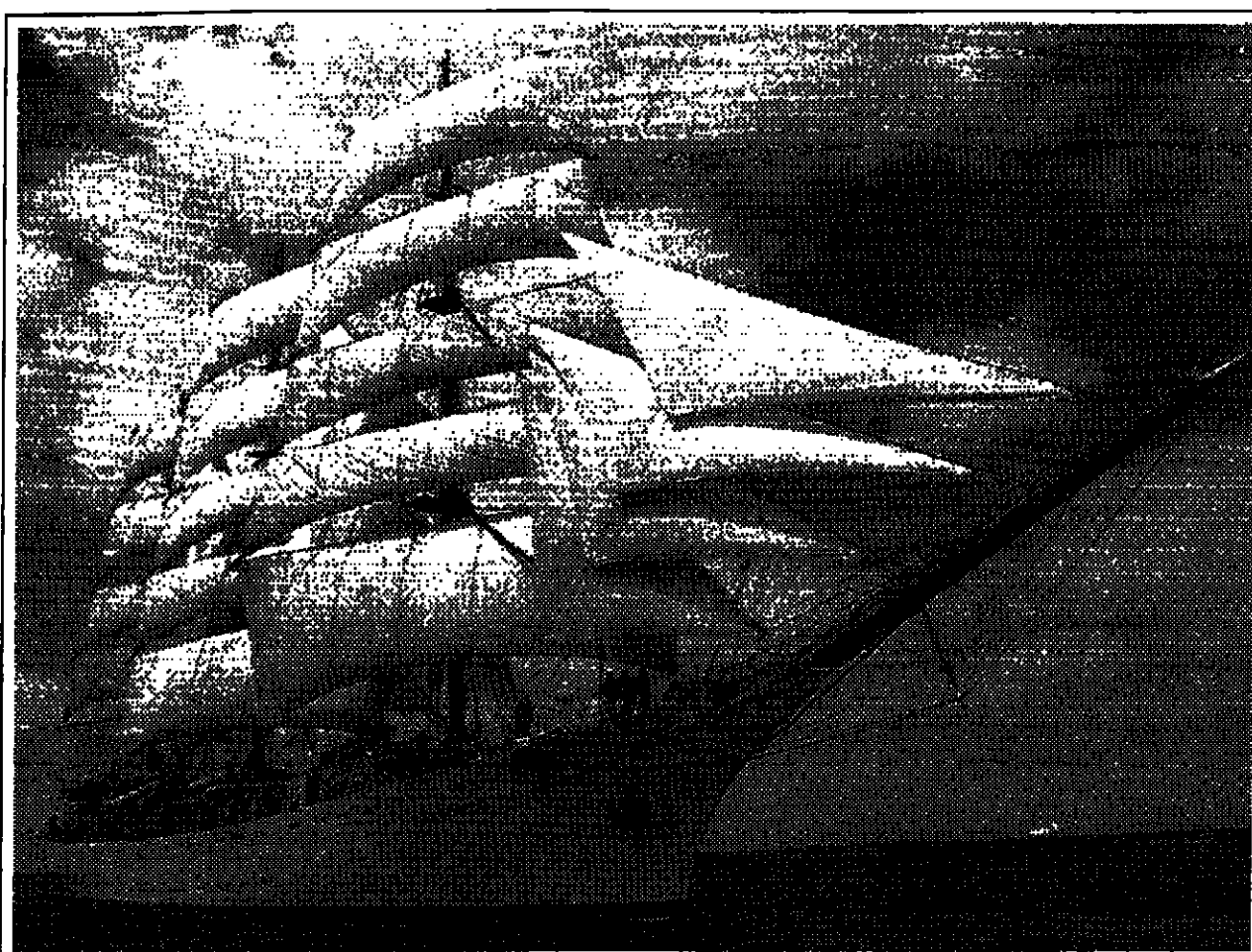
The ministers were not expected to take steps to revive the alliance, which diplomats had over the years declared as dead.

Shortly after it was formed, the military aspect of the pact was said to be unnecessary and a face-saving formula that allowed bilateral military cooperation was adopted. It came to nothing.

The Gulf states now have defence agreements with big powers like the United States, France and Britain.

Egypt and Syria were to benefit from a \$10 billion fund to be set up by the Gulf states, but it did not materialise. Diplomats say however the Gulf states had each given millions of dollars in loans at favourable interest rates or grants to both Arab states in appreciation of their Gulf war role.

There have been reports



THE UKRAINIAN TALLSHIP XEPCOHEC SAILS NEAR BREST: The Ukrainian tallship 'Xepcohec' seen off the coast of Brest under full sail as some 2,500 boats gather. Friday prior to the opening of BREST 96. More than 2 million visitors are expected to attend the July 13-20 gathering of sailing boats of all sizes (Reuters photo)

Some U.S. troops to shift in S. Arabia

WASHINGTON (R) — Some U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia will be moved to more secure locations as a precaution following last month's truck bomb attack in Dhahran, the Defence Department said on Thursday.

"It's quite clear that there will be some movement to some place. I do think there will be some movements of some troops," Pentagon spokesman Ken Bacon said at a briefing.

Mr. Bacon said plans for the transfer were not complete so he could not say how many troops would be shifted. There are about 5,000 U.S. servicemen in Saudi Arabia, mostly members of the U.S. air force.

The June 25 blast killed 19 airmen at a housing complex in Dhahran. A bomb last November in Riyadh killed five Americans.

There have been reports

that many of the troops would be moved from urban areas in Saudi Arabia to more remote bases.

Mr. Bacon said U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia and the Mideast remained on a high state of alert against another attack.

The State Department said on Wednesday that the U.S. embassy in Saudi Arabia had received reports suggesting there could be further attacks on Americans.

Asked if U.S. officials expected another attack, Mr. Bacon said there were strong concerns about one. He said the Defence Department was aware of the same reports as the state department.

Mr. Bacon dismissed as wrong a Washington Post report on Wednesday that top Pentagon officials had been warned about security problems at the Khobar Towers complex in a June

17 intelligence report.

"It was not a security alert. It was a summary of protective steps that Saudi officials had taken in response to security observations made by U.S. and Saudi officials in recent months," Mr. Bacon said.

He refused to release the full classified report but said it contained a summary of suspicious incidents that had taken place at the complex since April, when four men were beheaded by Saudi Arabia for the November bombing.

"It (the report) did not suggest that new actions be taken," Mr. Bacon said. He said the incidents included sighting of suspicious men and vehicles near the complex. He said 130 security improvements had been made at Khobar Towers since the Riyadh bombing including additional barriers and increased patrols.

But Saudi officials had not approved a U.S. request to expand the security perimeter around the complex from 100 to 400 feet (30 to 90 metres).

Mr. Bacon said Defence Secretary William Perry did not see the June 17 report but was aware of the security concerns.

But Senate intelligence committee chairman Arlen Specter told a news conference he wanted Mr. Perry to explain why he did not order preventive action after reading the report or explain why he did not see it.

Mr. Specter, a Pennsylvania Republican, has questioned whether Mr. Perry should resign because of the bombing and said, "That question is looming a little larger as events are unfolding. But I'm not prepared to render a judgment yet. I think we need to hear the secretary's explanation."



World population could hit 9 billion in 2025

MEXICO CITY (R) — The world's population could swell to nine billion in 30 years, depending on how hard countries try to curb population growth, the head of the U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA) said Thursday. UNFPA Executive Director Nafis Sadik said during an event marking world population day that the U.N.'s most optimistic population forecast was 7.6 billion by the year 2025, with nine billion being the worst-case scenario. "The effectiveness of national policies and programmes and the international community in addressing population concerns. In the next years will determine whether the actual population number is closer to the higher or lower end," she told a news conference in this city of 18 million people. Millions of women in the developing world still did not have control over their own family planning decisions, a key part of the U.N. strategy to control the world's booming population, Ms. Sadik said. "We need to educate girls just as we educate boys just as much as boys that they can do what they want with their life and their minds," Ms. Sadik said.

Man's death triggers tragedy of errors

HANOI (R) — The death of an old man in central Vietnam triggered a series of accidents which killed his wife, a young father and seriously injured six people, the Thanh Nien newspaper said Thursday. After Vo Lieu, 74, died of natural causes Wednesday last week, his children administered a drug to his wife to prevent her screaming at the funeral scheduled for the following day. She died of an overdose before the funeral was held. A joint funeral was then held but at the graveyard, a truck transporting the coffin of Lieu and his wife careened out of control and crashed into the funeral procession, killing a 26-year old man and injuring six undertakers.

Beijing bans burials in precious farmland

BEIJING (R) — The Beijing city government has banned burials in precious farmland and ordered that cemeteries be built only in areas where nothing will grow, the Xinhua News Agency said Friday. The standing committee of the city's parliament, or People's Congress, Thursday passed the new rules, which will take effect from Oct. 1, it said. The regulations were intended to promote the reform of funerals and burials, protect land resources and advance "cultural and ideological progress," with detailed regulations on storing ashes and building cemeteries. Cemeteries must be built on barren mountain sides or barren land and may not be built on farmland, the rules said. By the end of 1994, there were 29 illegal cemeteries in 25 suburban areas of Beijing occupying more than 40 hectares (98.8 acres) of land, the China Daily said. Builders must get permission from local government departments before they can construct a cemetery, it said. China strongly encourages people to cremate the dead, especially urban residents, but most people prefer to keep the ashes of their relatives in graves or cemeteries, despite an official campaign to scatter them in the sea to save land.

Yemen population reaches 16.6 m

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